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THE  
MONTH OF MARY



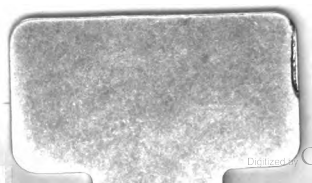
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THE  
MONTH OF MARY,  
OR THE  
*Month of May.*

BY FATHER MUZZARELLI,  
Of the Company of Jesus.

CONSECRATED TO  
MARY MOST HOLY.

WITH  
*Exercises in sundry Flowers of Virtue*

TO BE PRACTISED IN PUBLIC CHURCHES AND  
IN PRIVATE HOUSES.

*"Flores mei fructus honoris et honestatis."*—EccI. xxiv. 23.

*NEW EDITION.*

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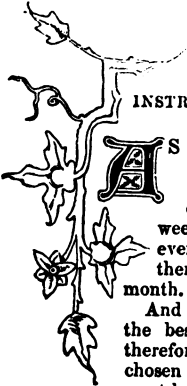


## The Month of Mary.

ETC.

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### INSTRUCTION UPON THIS DEVOTION.



**A**S the devout servants of MARY usually have three times in each day to venerate her, morning, mid-day, and evening; and in every week a day, viz. Saturday; so in every year it seems reasonable for them to consecrate to her one whole month.

And since, in making offerings it is the best which should be presented, therefore of all the months, they have chosen that to give to her which is the most beautiful of the whole year, that is May, which, with its flowery pleasantness, invites us to crown the Queen of Heaven with fair acts of virtue. The practice of such devotion may be rendered not less devout than pleasing and varied, in the following method.

In one's own house, and in that room in which the family is used to assemble to say their prayers, or else in some church or oratory, a devout image of Mary may be exposed, which should be adorned



in the best possible manner that the family's means allow ; as, for instance, with candles, or with some vessel of the fresh flowers which the season supplies. It will be any thing but ill if it be the very same place where we study, or play, or take recreation, or labour, in order to sanctify that place, and to regulate our actions as if done under the purest of eyes, those of the most Blessed Virgin.

The evening before the first day of May, let the family be assembled before the aforesaid little altar, with lights on it, and let there be recited the Rosary or Chaplet, or at least the Litany of the Virgin most holy. Other prayers also may be added, according to the custom or various needs of the family. Care, however, should be taken, that in wishing to increase the number of the prayers, the devotion is not diminished by making those which are said to be gone negligently over, or those who say them to be over-tired, especially if children or people of business.

These prayers over, every one draws by lot, for the first evening, one of the Spiritual Flowers which we shall give below, and which ought to be copied again, and folded up into as many billets as before ; and the flower so extracted ought to be kept by each one for his own exercise through the whole of the month. They must also draw by lots another of the little flowers, which are ranged in order below in the second series, which is to serve for the following day only. After this, the consideration assigned to the first of May is read, with the example there annexed, and the act of homage and ejaculatory prayer, which all are to use in common.

That which is said of this first evening must be done every evening of the month, except the drawing of that flower which serves for the whole month, taking care, however, to remember to practise this, as well as the other which is drawn, from day to

day ; and also to dwell a little by one's self upon the points of the meditation, repeating, during the day, the ejaculation which has been pointed out.

Besides this, every week, or at all events every fortnight, you are to attend your duties ; making your confession and communion with more than ordinary care.

Every day when you go out of the house, do not (where this is possible) return without having visited a church or an altar consecrated to MARY.

Throughout the month behave yourself as if you belonged wholly to MARY ; doing all your actions so as to avoid displeasing her most pure eyes.

At the end of the month, make an offer of your heart to MARY : you will find a mode for doing this at the end of this little book.

*Twelve Acts of Virtue,*

TO BE PRACTISED THROUGH THE WHOLE MONTH  
OF MAY.

To be distributed by drawing by lot, one for each of the family or congregation, the evening before the first day of May.

I. When the hour of rising is come, get up quickly, not to commence the day by an act of sloth; dress yourself with modesty, and recite the daily exercise.

II. Hear holy Mass every day devoutly, reciting meanwhile the Office of the most holy Virgin, or other devout prayers.

III. Read every day for a quarter of an hour some good book, the life of some Saint for instance, or some book that treats of the four last things; abstaining entirely from reading common books unless they belong to your calling.

IV. Deprive yourself every day of some pleasure that you delight in, however innocent, as of your collation, some object of curiosity, smelling a flower, hearing music, &c.

V. Be charitable to the poor, giving them something in voluntary alms; if nothing else, at least your collation.

VI. Every day before commencing any thing of moment in your business, or before setting yourself to study, to work, &c., fall on your knees, and invoke, with an "Ave Maria," the assistance of the most holy Virgin.

VII. Every day, as you go out of your room or enter it, kiss the image of MARY, and salute it with an "Ave Maria."

VIII. Practise punctuality in obeying your betters, not delaying a moment to perform, and that

with a cheerful look, any thing which they bid you do that is not offensive or displeasing to God.

IX. Avoid speaking evil of others, or blaming them, even in trifling things, in order to accustom yourself not to do it in grave matters.

X. Manage every day, either by example or words, to induce some companion disgusted with religion, to do some good ; to visit a church, to say the Rosary, to go to confession or communion, or do somewhat of this kind.

XI. Every day mortify your appetite in something ; leaving wholly, or in part, some viand that you like best on the table ; not drinking out of meal-time, although thirsty, &c.

XII. Beware this month of committing deliberate venial sins.

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### Other Acts of Virtue,

TO BE DRAWN BY LOT EVERY DAY OF THE MONTH.

I. Kiss devoutly books in which the name of MARY is found written.

II. Get a Mass said, or at least hear one, for the soul in purgatory that was most devout to the most holy Virgin.

III. When you hear the clock strike, say an "Ave Maria."

IV. As soon as dressed, and before undressing at night, turn yourself towards some church, or image, the most devout in the place, and beg of the most holy Virgin her most holy benediction.

V. Manage to do some kindness to some one to whom you think you have an aversion, or that you are offended with.

VI. Guard with more diligence your senses, and particularly the eyes.

VII. Say five decades of the Rosary, depriving yourself of some recreation for the purpose.

VIII. As a suffrage for the soul in purgatory most devout to the Virgin, say three times the "De profundis."

IX. Hear Holy Mass with your eyes upon the ground all the while.

X. To please MARY, do not transgress any rule of the school or manufactory, especially that in which you usually fall short.

XI. Abstain from giving the least annoyance to your companions, putting up with one if given.

XII. Be punctual at study, at prayer, and at all that is prescribed you by rule.

XIII. At the beginning of the day dedicate to the Virgin, along with the senses of your body, all the actions that you are to do that day.

XIV. Make mental prayer for a quarter of an hour.

XV. At Mass make spiritual communion, consisting of five acts: 1, of Faith; 2, of Adoration; 3, of Contrition; 4, of Resolution; 5, of Desire to receive Jesus.

XVI. If you have any vanity in your dress, take it off in honour of MARY, and give the value of it to the poor.

XVII. Make, during the day, two acts of contrition, and kiss the crucifix.

XVIII. In the morning, get quickly out of bed, not to commence the day with an act of sloth.

XIX. Deprive yourself of some diversion that is to your mind, even though lawful.

XX. Read a devout book for a quarter of an hour.

XXI. Make this evening an examination of conscience before you go to bed.

XXII. Do not eat or drink unnecessarily during the day.

XXIII. Mortify your will three times ; offering these three acts to MARY.

XXIV. Reserve for some poor creature a part of your dinner or collation.

XXV. Make a visit to those in prison, or to some one that is sick ; or in some other way comfort those in affliction.

XXVI. Recommend fervently to the Virgin those that are in mortal sin.

XXVII. Do some external act of humility to please the Virgin.

XXVIII. Do some corporal penance, according to the advice of your confessor.

XXIX. Overcome sloth in matters spiritual and devotional.

XXX. Recite the "Gloria Patri" seven times, with your arms crossed, in honour of the dolours of MARY.

XXXI. Beg pardon of Mary for all negligence committed this month.

*Where the drawing of these flowers by lot cannot well be managed, let one be taken every day according to the order in which they are placed ; but where they are drawn by lots, it is as well to select, from amongst these thirty-one, those only which are adapted to the classes of persons who keep this month together, by writing them on so many billets, and by drawing one every evening for the following day, as is said in the Instruction prefixed to this devotion.*

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A METHOD MOST USEFUL IN PRACTICE FOR THE  
EXERCISE OF THE SPIRITUAL FLOWERS OF THE  
MONTH OF MAY.

There cannot be any doubt that the practice most useful, and the homage most acceptable to the Vir-

gin, in this month, is the using of the spiritual flowers heretofore pointed out, in a devout and faithful way. In order, however, that this devotion may obtain you greater consolation at the point of death, you may mark them down on a sheet with this title :

*A garland of flowers gathered by me, N. N., a very great sinner, to be presented to the Virgin at the point of my death, commenced in the year on the first day of the month of May.*

After this, write in order, one after another, on the same sheet, all the days of the month of May, in this manner :

*First day.*

*Second day.*

*Third day, &c. &c.*

Then in the evening look and see if you have got the two spiritual flowers which come to your lot; that is, that of the whole month, and the other of each day ; and if you find you have, set them down on the sheet near to the current day, making two crosses ; or if not, two noughts, resolving to get them on the following day. If you have got one and missed the other, write one cross and one nought. This will be a practical example :

*First day* + + ; or may be, 0 — 0 ; or may be, + — 0.

Thus, by adding flowers from day to day, you will find they come to a good number by the month's end. Then, on the feast of the first Sunday of the month of June, you will present the said flowers to the blessed Virgin, blended together by the most precious blood of her divine Son ; and you will do the same when death approaches, hoping from this Mother of Mercy for a recompense even for this little gift.

A youth who had taken up this devotion, expressed his feeling and his confidence of obtaining

the reward of it from the blessed Virgin, in the following verses :

" No day shall pass without its flower from me,  
Thus wreathing chaplets, gracious Maid, for thee ;  
Well am I pleased 'mid thorns to pass my days,  
When roses flowering from them have such grace.  
Thou, for this wreath (such hope thou hast inspired)  
Wilt have thy child with deathless crown attired."

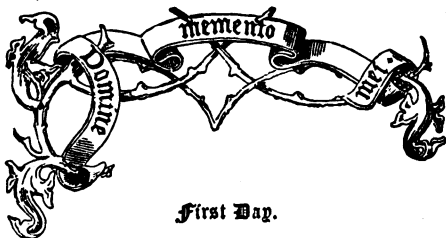
And, in truth, who can doubt that the blessed Virgin, who is so liberal and generous with the many crowns of glory that she has at her disposal, will fail to keep one for him who, with untired constancy, has endeavoured to offer to her the aforesaid crown ?





## NOTICE.

*The examples here introduced are all taken, word for word, from the devout little work of Father Thomas Auriemma, "Interchange of Affections between the most Holy Virgin and her devout Servants." The aforesaid author extracted them, for the most part, from the annual letters of the Company of Jesus, as may be seen from his references. Now the probity, gravity, and learning of the religious who attest with common consent these facts, which happened from year to year in places where they resided, and of which they themselves were witnesses, or heard them first hand, tend to obtain with a judge, discreet, practised, and prudent, and not preoccupied by irreligious prejudices, all that human faith which is all that can be demanded for these facts. Men of the greatest learning and erudition, and who ought, in these matters, to be our guides shew themselves far less rigid about setting aside the number of these wonders, and some of their extraordinary circumstances, than persons of superficial or mediocre information. What should this teach us? In order to know the truth of a fact so frequent, it would be enough to read the treatise, of some length, which has been left us upon the subject by the celebrated F. Bolland, in the general preface premised to the "Lives of the Saints," the third chapter, the second and following paragraphs.*



### **First Day.**

#### **CONSIDERATION OF THE MOTIVES FOR KEEPING THE MONTH OF MAY WELL.**

**GREAT** is the need you have of **MARY** in order to be saved! Are you innocent? Still your innocence is, however, under great danger. How many more innocent than you have fallen into sin, and been damned! Are you penitent? Still your perseverance is very uncertain. Those habits, those occasions, those old companions—you understand me at once. Are you sinners? Oh, what need you have of **MARY** to convert you! You have begun many a time, and have never yet succeeded with it. Ah, if there were no **MARY**, perhaps you would be lost.

However, by the devotion of this month you may obtain her patronage, and your own salvation. Is it possible that a Mother so tender can help hearing a son thus devout? For a rosary, for a fast, she has sometimes conferred signal graces upon the greatest of sinners. Think, then, what she will do for you for a whole month dedicated to her service.

But woe to you if you lose this grace; woe to you if you begin, and, after a few days, aban-

don it ! Who knows if this will not be the last opportunity which God will give you of being converted ! Who knows if upon this devotion your final perseverance may not depend ! Yes, who knows if this may not be the last month of your life ! If with so little you can acquire so great a patron, and do not do it, what grief, what remorse will you have at the point of death ! Bethink yourself well, and resolve accordingly.

#### EXAMPLE.

One of the Congregation of MARY was very near meeting the punishment of his unfaithfulness. This man (*Auriem. Affett. Scamb. tom. i. p. 61*) at first frequented the Congregation ; afterwards he became so tepid as to leave it altogether. Neither the prayers nor the admonitions of his companions did him any good : it needed a ghost to arouse him. One night this man was asleep, and saw a father, well known by him, who once had thoughts of entering the Congregation to which he used to go. He scolded him, and said to him, "*Already your name, negligent sluggard that you are, has been carried to the Blessed Virgin, under whose guardianship the Congregation is placed ; if you do not mend your ways, I can tell you, you will find a heavy chastisement fall upon you.*" He awoke, and did not make any account of what had happened in the dream. Lo, and behold, another night the same father came, and reproached him more severely, and threatened him, urged him to frequent the Congregation again, and rebuked him ; but it did little or no good ; he saying that dreams

were not to go for more than such: others wished to shut him up, but that he wished to be free. Other more clear tokens and more bold calls were necessary to make one like him repent, who had left not only the Congregation, but the fear of God also. The third time he saw the aforesaid father in a dream, who, besides the admonition, seemed to take him by the hand and conduct him to church; and when he had got there, he said to him, "*Sluggard, what are you doing? Make a perfect confession; for, till now, you have omitted to mention such and such a sin;*" and he named it distinctly. Then awaking in a great fright, seeing that that was true which he had heard in his sleep, he went away immediately to the Congregation, confessed with great grief and penitence, and remained in our Lady's service, whose great kindness was shewn towards one, otherwise undeserving, who had remained stubborn in spite of so many calls.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Wear on your heart the image of Mary, and pressing it with affection to your bosom, say often, "O Mary, I wish this heart to be thine!"

#### EJACULATION.

"Dignare me laudare te, Virgo sacrata."

"Joy of my heart! oh, let me pay  
To thee thine own sweet month of May!"

**Second Day.****CONSIDERATION ON THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL.**

I am in the world only to get saved. Do you understand, my soul? You are not in the world to make yourself comfortable, to play the grandee, to dress, to be at ease, and much less to sin; you are in the world only to save yourself. What will it avail you to have in your power the whole world, if, after all, you have to lose yourself. Kings, emperors, philosophers, men of letters, what use to you will your power or your learning then be, if you have not known how to save your soul?

But this business of salvation is most uncertain. The salvation of the soul cannot be bought with gold; it is gained by doing violence to one's self; it is lost by one single mortal sin, even of thought. To be saved, it is not enough to have been holy and innocent at one time; we must persevere up to death. What security, then, have I that I shall get saved? My past life has sins and relapses sown all over it; my present is an abyss that I know not; my future life, what will it be? No one knows except God alone.

Finally, this is an affair in which there is no making of reparation. If I lose a lawsuit, if I lose my health, I may hope to find some remedy; but if I lose my soul once only, there is no remedy left for all eternity. If they cut off one hand from me, I have another still left; if they amputate a foot, I should have another

left; if they drew out an eye, I should have another left. But there is one soul only; either saved alone, or damned alone. And do I think so little about getting saved, or do I hold myself so secure? I live at ease, and yet if I were to die now, I know not whether I should be saved.

## EXAMPLE.

That MARY obtains the salvation of her devout servants is no great wonder; but that she should do so for one who never recollects her, this it is that shews the ~~bowels of~~ mercy of a Mother's love. Let me take as a proof of this the lad (*Aurien.* pt. ii. p. 253) Esquilio, who, though he was not more than twelve years old, yet led a most wicked and impure life. God, who willed to draw him to Himself, made him fall very ill indeed, so that, despairing of life, the lad expected death every hour; when, having lost his senses, and being thought by the bystanders to have expired already, he was conducted to a place full of fire! and while he tried to escape these flames, he saw a gate, proceeding through which he came to a hall, where he found the Queen of Heaven, with many saints who formed her court. Esquilio flung himself at her feet; but she with severe frown hid herself from him, and bade him be led back again to the fire. The wretch invoked the saints, and they had this answer from Mary, "*That he had been exceedingly wicked, and that he never said so much as one 'Ave Maria.'*" The saints interposed again, and said that he would have altered habits. Esquilio, meanwhile, full of great fear, promised to give himself up to things of the

Spirit, and to serve her as long as he lived. Then the Blessed Virgin gave him a severe reprimand, exhorted him to correct with penance his past sins, and to keep his promise to her, and revoked the order given for him to be cast into the flames. At this Esquilio came to himself again, and having got well of his malady, became a religious of the Cistercian order, which is dedicated in a particular manner to the Blessed Virgin; and made there such progress in virtue, that he became a saint, and will sing in heaven the glories of this his loving Mother.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Make a visit to an image of Mary, and commend your soul fervently to her intercession.

#### EJACULATION.

“Salva me, Domina; salva me!”

“Mary! one gift I beg of thee,  
My soul from sin and sorrow free.”

#### Third Day.

#### CONSIDERATION UPON THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE SOUL.

Consider, O my soul, how precious you are, from the nobleness of your origin. From what hands did you come forth? From the hands of God. In whose image were you made? In the image and likeness of God. This is not an exaggeration, not a figure, not a way of speaking; it is a truth. “*God created man out*

*of the ground, and made him according to His own image.*" (Ecclus. xvii. 1.) And you, so far from thinking of your nobleness, forfeit this image through sin, in order to take the shape of a demon.

Consider, next, how precious you are by the price given for your ransom. O my soul, you were lost, and lost for ever! And who was it that redeemed you from the devil's hand? Your Heavenly Father. And what has he expended to ransom you? Was it gold, silver, precious stones? Ah, much more, infinitely more. He has spent for your ransom the life and blood of His own Divine Son. And a life so precious, a life that cost so much, will you lose it again for a caprice, for a satisfaction of nought?

Consider, lastly, how precious you are, from the happiness you are destined for. You are the daughter of the Supreme Monarch of the world, destined to sit near His throne, and to reign with Him. But the daughter of a king, who is to succeed to the crown, with what watchfulness, with what solicitude is she educated in her father's court; and you, O my soul, the heir of Paradise, where is it that you are watched over? where that you dwell? O my God, in the midst of mire, in all this filthiness, like an unclean animal! And do you not perceive the disgrace? and do you not fear, then, that God will disinherit you?

#### EXAMPLE.

MARY will not allow a thing dedicated to her to follow sin. Now, consider, if she can bear to see a soul, consecrated by the blood of her Son,



defiled with sin. There was a secretary of the Congregation of MARY in Seville, who (*Auriem.* pt. ii. p. 57) had two pens made, elegantly worked with silk and gold, in order to write the names of the members, to make out letters-patent, and things of the kind. A lad of the same society saw them, desired to have them, and stole one : but it cost him very dear, not so much for the theft, as for the work for which he employed it. He had dealings with a lady of disreputable character, and wishing to write to shew his affection to her, he took this worked pen which he had stolen. As he began writing, he felt a very brisk blow upon his cheek, without seeing the hand which struck him ; still he heard these words : " Have you still the hardihood, then, you wicked man, to defile a thing dedicated to me ? " At the sudden blow and fearful voice the wretched man was scared ; the pen was taken from his hand by a hidden force, and he, struck to the ground, came to himself, and acknowledged his error, humbly begged pardon, and resolved upon amendment. Yet the mark of the blow was not thus got rid of ; for he had his cheek blue for many days, and in it were the marks of the blow, to shew that it had not been given by any earthly hand ; and if he had wished to keep his mouth silent about what had happened, nevertheless he proclaimed it by his look. It would have been better for him if, like many devout people, he had written with the pen the name of MARY.

## ACT OF HOMAGE.

Examine yourself, to see if you have any mortal sin in your soul ; and if you find any, go at once and confess it, or else detest those that you have done in times past.

## EJACULATION.

“ Solve vincla reis ; profer lumen cæcis.”

“ Direct my wandering feet aright,  
And be thyself mine own true light.”

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**Fourth Day.**

## CONSIDERATION ON THE HEALTH OF THE BODY.

Why do you sin ? to content your flesh ? Fool ! do you not perceive that you are ruining it ? If you lose your soul, you will save your body may be ? No ; either both happy, or both damned. It is with one body only we have to do ; if this be damned, you have no other body to substitute in its place in order to become happy. The torment will be that of the whole body, of all its least fibres, veins, nerves, bones, of all its senses, and not then, as at present, the pain of one of its limbs, or of a particular member. We are tired out with a headache, with a bed somewhat hard, with a seat a little inconvenient, a distasteful food, or an incommodious posture. But in hell, ah ! in hell, how will matters be there ?

How ambitious are you now that your body may be a good figure ! You will die, and your

head will remain a skull, bare, without flesh, without skin, without eyes, without lips, without tongue; hands and feet stripped of flesh, and the rest a den of rottenness and worms. But if you be, moreover, damned, your face will become blacker than the face of an Ethiopian, your hair will be a group of snakes and serpents, your tongue will shake like a fiery viper, and your eyes be like two burning coals; in fine, you will become a devil! Bethink yourself of this.

When your flesh wishes to make you sin, you should say to it, Ah, rebel flesh, if I accede to your wishes, you will burn in fire with me for all eternity! Will it be worth the while to enjoy so small a joy, and yet be punished for ever? Ah, if you wish to love your body, love it if you will; but procure it a true good, a true beauty, a good and a beauty eternal in Paradise.

#### EXAMPLE.

MARY is not only protectrix of the soul of her devout servants, but also that of the body. Agatha of the Cross of the Order of St. Dominick had good proof of this. She was playing one day (*Auriem.* pt. ii. p. 252), in her childish days, with one of her own age, on a high place at the top of the house, and got pushed off from thence, and fell to the ground. Agatha, as she fell, said, "MARY, help me." The Virgin ran to her, and with her sacred hands placed her on the ground without any hurt. But the favours of MARY towards those that are hers will not end here. One day when standing alone, a poor man came to her house to beg for alms; the good

Agatha, moved with compassion to him, mounted to cut down something or other which was hanging on a peg. The devil being a capital foe to the children of MARY, made her fall from the ladder on which she was mounted, and with the knife she held in her hand, she cut off her finger. Agatha, both from the pain she felt, and from the fear of being teased by her companions when they came home, recommended herself to the Blessed Virgin, who, it is said, appeared visibly to her, restored the finger which was cut off and fallen to the ground, and said to her, "My daughter, be not afraid of the devil; when he wishes to hurt you, call my Son to your assistance, and you will be free." So said MARY. Can there be any affection more tender than that of this great Mother of fair love?

## ACT OF HOMAGE.

Do an act of mortification of your appetite; as a penance for the unlawful satisfactions given to your body.

## EJACULATION.

"Munda cor et corpus meum, Maria."

"Be love of thee the purging fire  
To cleanse for God my heart's desire."

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Fifth Day.

## CONSIDERATION UPON TIME.

Time passes away, and I pass away with it. Fifteen, twenty, thirty, forty years of my life

are already passed, and will return no more. And how many have I remaining? That I know not; but I do know that they are few. The time is short; I myself say, Time flies, without my even perceiving it. But in comparison of eternity, time is not only very short, it is almost nothing.

Time is short but precious, since in this time that is so short I may acquire an eternal satisfying felicity. Every moment well spent gives me a degree more of glory in Paradise; a half-hour well employed in looking over the accounts of my soul may rescue it from the hands of Satan, and send it back into those of God; a little time set apart every day for prayer, or for Mass, or a spiritual book, may keep me away from sin and secure me salvation.

Time is short but awful. Ah, every instant I may sin—I may die—I may be damned! Wretched me, that in so short a time might become a saint, and am still a sinner. I have lost my time in vanity, in childishness, in jests, in diversions, and in sins. What pleasure does it prove now to have wasted my time in this way hitherto? If I do not think of spending it better, a day will come when I shall beg of God one hour only to be converted in; and that hour I shall never see to all eternity.

#### EXAMPLE.

Oh, how profitable is a little time well spent in honour of MARY! Two youths agreed to go one day (*Auriem.* t. i. p. 93) to the river and got into a boat for pleasure. One of these said to his companion, "Now we have nothing

to do, and have amused ourselves enough, let us recite our Lady's office, as the rule of our Congregation requires." "But that is not binding under sin," answered his companion; "I want to amuse myself, it is a holiday to-day; I have no mind for prayer." The other, for all this, set himself to recite it alone. Meantime, the wind got up, and the water ran very strong; they, being but little practised in managing the boat, could not steer it against the force of the water, or put it ashore. The boat turned over, and sunk in the water; they both invoked the Blessed Virgin, and she was soon there, and took by the hand him who had recited the office, drew him out of the danger, and conducted him into safety. The other (his companion) expected the like; but our Lady returned, and said to him, "*You were not obliged to honour me, nor am I to help you!*" And he was left to the mercy of the stream. His companion heard and saw all this, and thanked the Blessed Virgin for his life, which he acknowledged that he had from her hands for the homage he had done her.

## ACT OF HOMAGE.

Recite the office of our Lady, or the five Psalms which are sung in her Congregation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That is, those five whose initial letters make the name Maria, viz. the Magnificat; Ps. cxix., "Ad Dominum cum tribularer;" Ps. cxviii., "Retribue servo tuo;" Ps. cxxv., "In convertendo;" and Ps. cxxii., "Ad te levavi."

## EJACULATION.

**" Vitam præsta puram, iter para tutum."**

**" Mother ! be love of thee a ray  
From heaven, to shew the heavenward way."**

## Sixth Day.

## CONSIDERATION UPON MORTAL SIN.

Have you ever sinned ? Alas, what did you then do ? You endeavoured, as far as ever you could, to destroy and annihilate your Creator, your Father, your Redcemer, your Spouse, your God, your all. What disobedience, what rebellion, what ingratitude, what enormity ! You lost grace, your sonship to God, the merits of your past life, the inheritance of Paradise ! You were hurled down from heaven to the brink of hell ! How disgraceful !

And will you now still sin ? Poor soul ! Do you know who is your enemy ? It is God ! Do you know of whom you are the daughter ? Of the devil ! You play, walk about, sleep, laugh ; but if God were wearied of you, in a single moment you would be dead, you would be damned. Thousands of angels have fallen into hell for a single sin of thought. And do you, with so many sins, think yourself safe ? What excessive blindness !

But if not in sin, you are still always in danger of falling into it. A temptation somewhat violent, an event unexpected, may make you sin when you least think it. An angel sinned in

heaven, Adam sinned in Paradise, Judas and Peter sinned in the school of Jesus Christ. Do you then, also, remember that from an angel, an innocent, an apostle, you may in a moment become a demon! Remember this, and tremble.

#### EXAMPLE.

If you wish to escape sin, be specially devout to MARY. It was very extraordinary how she preserved a youth in Messina unhurt (*Aurjem.* t. ii. p. 60). Although he served the Blessed Virgin with great purity in the Congregation, he nevertheless once found himself in great danger of losing it. The devil excited a wicked woman to solicit him to sin, and managed to bring about, that one day she should find herself alone with him, and, availing herself of the occasion, she made a vigorous assault upon his chastity. The good youth, reduced to these straits, and not having any means of defence, turned himself feelingly to MARY with this short prayer: "*Mary, most pure, help me; abandon me not in this my need.*" So he said, and soon he experienced the efficacy of her patronage; for this woman appeared to his eyes such as in her own soul she was. He saw her so transformed and hideous, that she seemed a monster come out of hell, with a horrible countenance, with hair like serpents, which made him shudder with fear to look at her rather than created any feeling towards her. Then he immediately perceived all guilty temptation towards her extinguished, and with severe words reprehended her for the boldness and impertinence she had



used, remaining victorious in this battle, in which those of his age are often such sad losers.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

If you feel yourself tempted, take up the chaplet and kiss it. To displease MARY while you kiss her rosary ; this you surely will not do.

#### EJACULATION.

“ A peccato mortali libera me, Domina ! ”

“ Mary ! make haste thy child to win  
From sin, and from the love of sin.”

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#### Seventh Day.

#### CONSIDERATION OF THE PUNISHMENTS OF SIN.

God can punish sin if He wills. A man offended with another will wish to avenge himself, but very often cannot do so. In God it is not so ; it is enough for Him to will it. He can punish it by taking away health, livelihood, parents' life ; it is enough for Him to will it. If you are now still in sin, He can punish you even now with a sudden death ; it is enough for Him to will it. But do you know what His will is ? You do not ; and yet you sin, and sleep tranquilly in your sin.

God wills absolutely to punish sin. If you have sinned, be sure that God will have satisfaction of you in some way, either in this world or the other, either penitence or hell. Eve and Adam obtained pardon for their disobedience ;

they are saved ; they are saints ; but the temporal punishment of their sin lasts still. You say, one sin more, or one sin less, does not signify. Well, then, does one punishment more, or one punishment less, not signify ?

God is really even now punishing your sins. These frequent infirmities, these family misfortunes, this post lost, these hopes disappointed, these calumnies of your rivals, these temptations so sharp and so continual, are, perhaps, the punishments of former sins, which you think no more about. But if you are satisfied in your whims, if all your designs go prosperously, this is a punishment more terrible, since you thereby confirm yourself in your bad life, and join sin to sin, and fuel to fuel for hell. But have you ever lost the remorse of conscience, the fear of God's punishments ? Wo to you ! you are punished with the utmost rigour of Divine justice. Ah, if any have need of all the protection of Mary, you certainly are the person.

#### EXAMPLE.

If God has delayed to punish you, ascribe it to MARY's intercession : but wo to you if you still do not mend your ways. A young gentleman in the kingdom of Toledo (*Auriem. t. ii. p. 14*) plunged into bad practices, yet preserved some devotion to MARY. While he was going on in this way a devout person saw, while waking, Jesus Christ in the act of wishing to punish, with a sudden death, this scandalous cavalier. The Virgin Mother interposed, and Jesus Christ answered : "*For the love of you,*

*I will give him thirty days time to do penance ; but if he continues obstinate in his sin, the sentence shall be executed."* This person went at once in quest of a good priest, and begged him to get the young gentleman to turn his attention to his own salvation. The priest accepted this charitable office, and prevailed so far as to induce him to make his confession, and change his life. But alas ! the cavalier soon fell back into sin. He had recourse to the same confessor, repented again, and determined to leave these habits off. But he did not keep to his resolutions much ; he entangled himself worse than ever in sin, and not only avoided the confessor, but one day, when he fell in with him, he gave him a very surly look, saying, "Go about your own business, father ; what do you want of me ?" The end of the thirty days came at last ; and the youth, not caring at all for his intentions, remained more sunk than ever in his filthy pleasures. When midnight came on, the wretched man was attacked with extreme pain : those of the house ran to him at his cries ; they went to fetch the confessor, who, upon his arrival, advised him to hope in MARY most holy ; but he spoke to a deaf man ; for when midnight came, the unhappy man said, with a terrible voice, "Here I die of a spasm in my heart." So saying, he expired.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Remain a quarter of an hour on your knees before an image of MARY, praying her to keep chastisements far from you.

## EJACULATION.

“Mater Dei, ora pro me.”

“Mother of God! let my poor love  
A Mother’s prayers and pity move.”

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## Eighth Day.

## CONSIDERATION ON DEATH.

I have to die then; I must leave relations, friends, goods, every thing, and even this body. My abode, henceforth, will be a sepulchre full of worms. My home, henceforth, of an eternity, good or evil, I know not which. This is a truth which it needs not faith to believe. I see it every day with my own eyes. The old die, and the young die; the poor die, and the rich die; the saints die, and sinners die; MARY died, and Jesus died; and so shall I also die.

But where? but how? Will it be at home, in church, in bed, in the street? I know not. Will it be of a slow fever, of a rapid decline, of an accident, of a fall? I know not. But at least I can say when? Perhaps thirty years hence; perhaps twenty; perhaps in this month; who knows if it may not be this night? I know not. God only knows, and He has told us that death will come like a thief in the night, when one least expects it.

And yet I am living as if I was never to die, and never even wish to think of death. If I were to die this moment, I have my conscience in such a confusion, that perhaps I should pass

from this place to hell. I know it, I fear it, and yet do not look for a remedy for it. I keep putting off from month to month, from day to day, and am always drawing nearer to death, but always am a sinner. But if I were to die now in sin, of whom should I have to complain?

#### EXAMPLE.

A child of ten years old, who was devout to MARY, will exemplify the assistance she gives at the point of death. When he went to school (*Auriem.* t. ii, p. 235), by God's will, he fell in with a good master. Once speaking about devotion to MARY, and in particular how useful it was to render her propitious at the hour of death, by offering her daily some act of homage; he, who from his age probably would not have had much thought about death, nevertheless, moved by his master's exhortation, made a firm resolution to say often to the Blessed Virgin words to this effect: *Hail, Mother of Mercy!* and he kept to it. He repeated it when he got up, when he went to bed, when he played with those of his own age, this short but devout ejaculation: "Salve, Mater Misericordiæ;" "Hail, Mother of Mercy." The Blessed Virgin wished to shew this mercy to him; and this was, that the little lad should have an illness of which he should die, in order that, as he grew in years, he might not fall short in devotion. So whilst he was dying, MARY appeared to him, and with a look of Paradise, said to him: "*Son, do you not know me? I am she whom you have so often saluted. I am the Mother of Mercy.*" At these words, the child

lifted up his head, and stretched out his hand to heaven, to which he took his flight. Oh, what great progress he made at school in a short time! This teaching of his master was more use to him than a hundred lessons.

## ACT OF HOMAGE.

Kiss the earth thrice, repeating to yourself the same words: "*Quid superbis terra et cinis?*"

## EJACULATION.

"*Tu nos ab hoste protege, et mortis horâ suscipe.*"

"Mary, when I shall come to die,  
Be thou, thy spouse, and Jesus nigh."

## Ninth Day.

## CONSIDERATION ON THE UNIVERSAL JUDGMENT.

In the judgment I have to appear before Christ the Judge. Oh, what an appearance! He was my Father, and I loved Him not; He was my Spouse, and I abandoned Him; my God, and I disregarded Him. In a single glance He will make me understand my ingratitude, my infidelity, and my insolence. Shall I turn myself to MARY? But with what face shall I do so, if, with my sins, I have crucified her Son? Shall I recommend myself to my Angel Guardian? But with what heart shall I do so, if I have almost always disobeyed him? My only advocate will be the demon. And he, 'till at that day, will be my accuser.

In the judgment all my sins have to be read in the face of the world. How I shall blush! In the face of those companions among whom I appeared an angel; in the face of my parents, who thought me innocent; in the face of my confessor, from whom I concealed things. They have all to be read. Even the most secret thoughts, the desires not carried out, the compliances so shameful! The sin I committed alone by myself, with a companion, in that place, in that school, in that place of business, in that church! How confounded shall I be!

In the judgment I have to receive my sentence, either blessed or cursed, and from whom? From Jesus! Either blessed by Jesus with the elect, or cursed by Jesus with the damned. And what more? Either with Jesus in Paradise, or with devils in hell. But cannot this sentence be suspended? No, not even for a single moment can it be recalled; not for all eternity. What pleasure to hear it said by Jesus: "*Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess My kingdom.*" What horror to hear it signified by Jesus: "*Depart, ye cursed, go into eternal fire.*" O God, what will be my sentence! Woe to me who must go to judgment, yet meanwhile think so little thereon!

#### EXAMPLE.

One of the most intimate companions and familiar friends (*Aur. t. ii. p. 289*) of Father St. Francis was Brother Leo; and among other visions that he had, one was this: He saw a large plain, and in it the form of the universal judgment; there was a great multitude of people

who expected their sentence, and heard the trumpets sound, which called the dead to judgment. At this he saw two ladders descend from heaven, one of white colour, the other red, upon the top of which Jesus Christ was supported; and there, near to him, the seraphic father, who called his friars, who were standing on the plain with the rest; and he invited them to mount the ladder, animating them with sweet words. They obeyed: but what then? As they mounted by this ladder, one fell from the third, another from the fourth, another from the tenth round. Then Francis, looking sad, exhorted them to go to the other white ladder, on which MARY was supported. They did so, and our Lady reached out her blessed hand to them, and so they mounted easily to heaven. Poor creatures that we should be, if we had not this most powerful Mother, who helps, in the most important matters, him that is mounting to heaven only by the ladder of justice.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

As you get into bed, imagine yourself to be judged by God, and hearken to what your conscience says.

#### EJACULATION.

“In die judicii libera me, Domina.”

“Oh, when before the Judge I stand,  
My holy shield be Mary’s hand.”



## Tenth Day.

## CONSIDERATION ON HELL.

See you, sinner, this foul prison full of fire and smoke? It is prepared for you, if you do not set about mending your ways. Observe that fire: there you will burn with the soul and the body that was its accomplice in so many sins. This flame will penetrate into your bowels, your throat, your bones, your skull; you will have to become like an iron heated red-hot in a forge; and, struck by the arms of devils, you will send forth sparks of fire in all directions. How will you bear living in that fire, you that could not bear in one finger the weak flame of a candle? And do you not bethink yourself about it!

If you are damned, what will be your occupation? It will be to think that you could have saved yourself with so little, and would not; to call to mind such and such a sermon, or exercises, or book, or inspiration with which God called you, and you did not hearken; to observe so many, and so many of your own condition, your own age, your own powers, your own school, your own Congregation, saved, and yourself damned; and after this to howl, to be in despair, to curse yourself, your Angel Guardian, your patron Saints, Jesus your Brother, and MARY your Mother! Oh, what a life, what an occupation is that in hell!

And if you fall into that flame, how long, think you, will you be there? A hundred years? More. A thousand years? More. A million years? More. A millior million years? More.

Millions and millions of millions of years? More, and still more. But how long? While God is God, for ever, for all eternity. And in all that time, will there never be a moment's truce? Never. Shall we never be able to move so much as a finger? Never. Shall we never be able to shut an eye for a quarter of an hour? Never. Shall we never obtain so much as one drop of water? Never, never. Oh, fire! oh, hell! oh, eternity!

## EXAMPLE.

If you wish to be saved, pray often to MARY to make you understand the nature of hell. Ugo, Marquis of Tuscany, had given himself up to a most licentious life; and although admonished by the Blessed Virgin, for whom he cherished some sort of devotion, yet nevertheless he had never repented. He went one day to a hunt on Mount Senario (*Auriem.* t. ii. p. 313), and, drawn by his eagerness in the chase, he directed his course towards the mountain, where he saw the air darkened for some distance with thunder, lightning, and horrible rain. He, wishing to find some retreat, lighted upon a cave, and, entering into it, he saw many devils under the form of black and deformed men, who were tormenting human limbs upon an anvil, and he thought that they were necromancers. Ugo shuddered, and shrieked aloud when he heard resound from the depth of the cavern these words, "*Carry him off;*" and they answered as follows: "*At his time, for She that is so powerful, to our loss, will not yet consent;*" these devils meaning to say that, by reason of the Blessed

Virgin, he was not tormented yet like the rest. At these words the marquis remained more terrified than ever, and turning himself to the Mother of holy fear, he requested her assistance, made the sign of the cross, and the devils dispersed. Going from the cave, he found, not far off, the hovel of a hermit named Eugenius, where he passed that night in spiritual discourses. The morning after, he went to find the Bishop of Florence, Eustachius by name, and told him how much the Blessed Virgin had assisted him, commenced a new life, did penance publicly, and, confessing his sins, said again and again, with many tears, "Ugo will not be Ugo any more." He founded seven monasteries, and endowed them with great munificence; and lived, in truth, such a son of MARY, that he was deservedly styled, "the most excellent prince."

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

When in church, collect yourself, and keep on ruminating in thought, as follows:

*If I had to remain in church here upon my knees for all eternity, how I should despair! And in hell! yes, in hell!—*

#### EJACULATION.

"A pœnis inferni libera me, Domina!"

"O Mary! let no child of thine  
In hell's eternal exile pine."

**Eleventh Day.****CONSIDERATION ON THE NUMBER OF THE  
REPROBATE.**

Turn your eyes down, my soul, to hell, count all the damned before the coming of Jesus Christ. That is Cain there; of two brothers, one saved, and one lost! And that great multitude are the souls of those that lived at the time of the flood; except one family, all, or nearly all, damned! And these others are the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha. And these are idolaters here—Egyptians, Amalekites, Canaanites, Assyrians, Phœnicians, Greeks, and Romans. And of the Hebrews, the chosen people, oh, how many of them there are damned!

Count next those in the time of Jesus Christ. How many Gentiles that were not converted! how many philosophers that were obstinate! how many Hebrews that persecuted Him! how many souls are down there, that conversed with Jesus Christ, that had dealings with Him, that saw His miracles with their own eyes! There is a Pilate, governor of Judea; there a Caiaphas, the high-priest; there a Herod, the king; there a Judas, the disciple of Jesus Christ; and there is a robber, whose lot it was to die at His side!

Then count the damned since His coming. Observe down there the many souls rebel against the Gospel, blind to the miracles, persecutors of the Church; all the Roman emperors, for the first three centuries, the philosophers, and orators, and poets, that made so much to do in the

world. Behold there many Catholics, notwithstanding their faith, inspirations, sermons, and sacraments! behold many princes, priests, bishops, and cloistered persons! And now, while I am meditating, how many souls are falling into hell!

And I keep saying within myself, If all sinners must be damned, there will scarcely remain any for Paradise. But consider how many damned there are there! What harm has come to God by their ruin! What lost to Paradise by their absence! Oh, my soul, live with the few, if you would be saved with the few!

#### EXAMPLE.

How many that would have been among the reprobate, have been saved by devotion to MARY! There were in the year 1714 two youths (*Auriem.* t. i. p. 47) at their studies in Flanders, with good understanding, but of a very licentious life. They both spent a whole day in drunkenness and jokes, and went at night to a house to offend God. When a good part of the night was passed, one of them wished to retire, the other remained to satiate his unbridled wishes, and drink to the bottom the chalice of Babylon. When the other had got home, he remembered that he had not recited some "Ave Maria's," which he used to recite to the Blessed Virgin, and perceived a great repugnance to saying them; yet, though half asleep, and with much weariness, he did recite them. MARY did not leave this homage without its reward, though it came from lips so

impure, and in a way worthy of punishment rather than of reward. He was scarce in bed and asleep from being worn out, when he heard a loud knock at the door of his chamber; he awoke, and without getting up to open it, he saw his companion enter in a ghastly shape. Terrified at this visit, and marvelling how he had entered through the locked door, he asked why he had come. The unhappy soul answered him thus: "We ought to have been both sent to hell this night by the just judgment of God; but the Blessed Virgin, to whom you recited the 'Ave Maria's,' has freed you from death; I am now damned. In such a street (and he mentioned which) my body lies killed by the fiends;" and in proof of the truth he uncovered his breast, shewing him the fire and many serpents that tormented him; and this said, he vanished. He speedily got out of bed, and began to weep exceedingly: meanwhile he heard the bell sound for matins in the convent of the Franciscan Friars, and thought that this signal was advice for him too; and that very moment went off thither, and with many tears begged for the habit. The good religious did not credit his words at once, until they had found his unhappy companion dead, and transformed from head to foot. Then they gave the penitent the habit, who changed his life in good earnest, and remained most attached to the Blessed Virgin, for whose intercession he felt deeply grateful; and might say, "Thanks to the Virgin that I am not in the flames."

## ACT OF HOMAGE.

Settle upon the devotion that you mean to do your whole life long, in honour of MARY; and write down a solemn promise to fulfil it, that she may free you from hell.

## EJACULATION.

"Gratias tibi, Virgo, quia non ardeo."

"If time for penance still be mine,  
Mother, the precious gift is thine."

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## Twelfth Day.

CONSIDERATION ON THE WICKEDNESS OF  
CHRISTIANS.

What can you do, O my God, to save me? Even I cannot tell Thee. If you invite me with the voice of mercy, I sin, hoping in your goodness. If you make me understand the depth of your justice, then I go on sinning, despairing of your pardon. If you make my heart tender, I offend you; if you rebuke me, I offend you. I bathe with tears the image of the Crucified, and, a few hours after, I go and open His wounds with my sins again. What an abyss of wickedness is this, that even I cannot understand it!

What remains that you can do, O my God, to save me? You have put me in the bosom of holy Church, have given me lights to know with, inspirations to rouse me, graces to resist with,

sacraments to strengthen me, examples to encourage me, tribulations to reclaim me. I have sinned; you might have punished me, and you have pardoned me. With others you have been severe; with me always merciful. You have done every thing to make a convert of me; and I every thing to make myself obstinate.

What can I ask of you, O my God, to be saved by? Your blood? You have shed it all for me. Your life? You have given it to your Father for me. Your body? It has been crucified for me. Your flesh? It is always kept ready for me. Even I do not know what to ask you for to keep me from sin. And yet, when I sin, at the bottom of my heart I often complain of you, as if your grace had failed me. Foolish that I am! So I do not understand that I hasten to destruction by my own wickedness only.

#### EXAMPLE.

If you still wish something extraordinary, whereby to be saved, you may always hope for it from the intercession of MARY. In Travancore, in East India (*Auriem.* t. ii. p. 290), a vessel put ashore, in which, among others, there was a soldier who had lost all hope of salvation, having given himself to the devil. He, by the will of God, entered a church, where he saw there was an image of our Lady, and fell on his knees before it, asking her help and intercession with Jesus. Then, as he said, he saw the Child Jesus, who was in her arms, weeping; and from MARY's hands the water ran in such abundance as to bathe the whole altar? Who can recount now



the tears of this man? He immediately conceived great hopes of being pardoned by means of her who is the fountain of mercy, and trusted that the Son would be appeased by the prayers of His Mother, seeing He received the penitent sinner with tears. This fact could not be concealed; his companions ran from the vessel, and saw the altar swimming. The effect was, that this soldier went at once to confess his sins with great sorrow, and made a vow to become a religious, as, in effect, he did, in order that the more wickedly he was bound to the devil, by the more binding a tie he might be united to God.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Make a visit to MARY, praying her to thank her divine Son for the benefits He has done you, and to obtain the pardon of your ingratitude.

#### EJACULATION.

“Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.”

“Thou, Mary, art my hope and life,  
The starlight of this earthly strife.”

#### Thirteenth Day.

#### CONSIDERATION UPON SCANDAL.

The sin of scandal is a great enormity. Consider what a soul cost Jesus Christ. It cost Him prison, ignominy, torments, and the cross; it cost Him all His Blood; it cost Him His life! And do you rob Him of this soul for so little, render

His passion useless to it, embitter His heart, as if in sport? In this you are like the devil, who "from the beginning was a murderer" of souls (John viii. 44). You, too, are murderers from your childhood; with those jests, with those signs, with those looks, with those invitations, killing by treachery the most innocent souls. Oh, how iniquitous!

The sin of scandal is a great abyss of sins. That sin which you have made that soul commit is your own sin; and all those sins which it has committed after the first, and which originated in that advice and teaching of yours, are also your sins. He sinned through your means; and then he also became to others a master in iniquity. All their sins are yours, since all are indebted for their beginning to your scandal. Oh, how great a burden of sins is this!

The sin of scandal is a great debt with God. With this sin you wage war with God Himself, and join with hell to obscure, as far as in you lies, His glory. With irreverence, with laughing, with talking, and, moreover, with courting, you profane His temple and altar. You snatch souls from Jesus Christ, take His heart away, and give it as a prey to His enemies, and remove them far from the kingdom of Heaven. Consequently, as far as you can, you impoverish His eternal kingdom of glory, deprive God of the thanksgivings and hymns of so many faithful servants of His, to people the kingdom of perdition, and multiply in hell those who blaspheme and curse Him. Reflect, then, with yourself how deeply you are in debt to God for so many scandals of so many years, and so great

malice. And yet he will be content, if, at least with your example, and with your counsel, you gain to His heart some souls in the place of those which you have taken away. He is content with so little for a debt so great, and you do not do it.

#### EXAMPLE

If you have the guilt of scandal, have recourse to MARY, that she may obtain you pardon for it. She herself pardoned a scandalous person in Avignon, who drew others away from devotion to her. This man had been not only most obstinate in refusing to go to the Congregation, but, moreover, hindered others from doing so. (*Auriem.* t. ii. p. 66.) By speaking ill of those in the Congregation, and murmuring against it, and by being of some standing in life, he obtained credit with many. Meantime an infirmity came upon him, which made him take to his bed. But though he saw death close at hand, he did not change. Upon the very day of the Conception, upon which the associates of the Congregation kept a solemn feast, there came to the infirm old man an inspiration, inducing him to think of his crimes, and to view things then, through MARY's intercession, in a different way to what he had viewed them when he was well. In that very hour he had that father called in who had the care of the Congregation which he had abhorred and despised, to make his confession to him. He came; and the sick man embraced him, begged his pardon, prayed him to hear his confession, and to admit him into the Congregation. The father re-

ceived him ; and at the same time the sick man got well both in body and in soul.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Behave with special modesty in church, in the streets, and in school, to make reparation for the scandals you have given to your neighbour.

#### EJACULATION.

“ A delictis meis munda me, et ab alienis parce servo tuo.”

“ Oh, for my own or others' sin,  
Do thou, who canst, free pardon win.”

### **Fourteenth Day.**

#### CONSIDERATION ON HUMAN RESPECT.

You would wish to be converted, and do not do it. And whence comes this? from human respect. If I go no more to that house, people will argue that my confessor has forbidden me. If I abandon these scandalous companions, people will think I am going to turn hermit. If I do not take part in those obscene jokes, they will say I have no spirit. If I make my eyes look modest, keep myself aloof from that music, from those walks, they will laugh at me, as full of scruples. To be damned for human respect, how foolish!

You have had a mind to become holy, and have never resolved upon doing so. Whence does this proceed? from a human respect. If one leaves entirely the conversazione, the the-

atre, the sights, they will say one is a savage. If I deprive myself of vanities, of these ornaments, this riband, this dress, they will say I am a clown. If they see me always at hospitals, at church, at benedictions, at the sacraments, they will say that I am a hypocrite. And do not you understand that for such vain apprehensions you lose the glory of a Saint in the world and in Paradise? Oh, what frivolity of mind!

But if you are ashamed of the Crucified, the Crucified will be ashamed of you. He Himself has threatened you, "*Whoever is ashamed of Me and of My doctrine, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him.*" (Luke ix. 26.) "O Lord," you will say, in the day of judgment, "do you not know me? I am a Christian." "Go," Jesus will answer, "I know you not. You have been abashed at bearing my livery, at bending your knees at Mass, your head at my holy Name, at making properly a sign of the cross; well, and yet you say you are a Christian! Go; I know you not. Go to your scandalous, immodest, licentious companions. They know you. I know you not."

#### EXAMPLE.

There is no human respect more baneful than that which prevents a person discovering his interior wounds to the Physician of souls. A man in Germany affords a striking instance of this (*Auriem.* t. ii. p. 102); he had fallen into a very great sin, and was attacked by such bashfulness and shame, that he could not bring himself to go to confession. He perceived withal much bitter remorse of conscience; and to free

himself from this pang, he took a most rash resolution, which was to plunge himself into a river, thinking, by this death, to put an end to the continual pain which he suffered. The poor man set out ; but, by Divine grace, having gone to the brink, he abstained from doing it. He returned home and wept bitterly for his sin, and prayed the Lord to pardon him, as he said, of the plenitude of His power, without going to confession ; and went to visit various holy places to obtain peace of conscience. But this God willed to give him, through the intercession of the most holy Mother. One night, as he slept, quite absorbed in his melancholy, he felt a gentle blow upon his shoulder, and heard a voice say, "*Go and confess.*" He got out of bed, and went to Varesdino, to the church of the Society of Jesus, to make his confession. He went there, and was more than ever assaulted with shame, and returned without doing any thing more. After some months had passed, he was struck in his sleep again ; returned to the said church—but what ? Why his shame came on as before ; he resolved to die sooner than tell his sin to a confessor ; so he passed the whole day in fighting with himself. At last, it being time to return home, he turned aside to the church to salute the image of our Lady, which was there. He prostrated himself, saluted it, and recommended himself to her in his grievous need. The Refuge of sinners, and the Consolation of the afflicted, would not abandon him, nor leave him without reward for the slight homage of having saluted her, and she obtained of her Son the victory for him. Scarcely was he on his knees, when he

perceived his heart in an altered state. He rose from prayer, called a confessor, and, with many tears, recounted to him the whole series of his life, received absolution, and, with it, serenity of conscience; and, at the same time, so much consolation and contentment that, as he said, he would not have had greater if he had gained all the gold in the world.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Uncover your head at every image of MARY that you meet with in the road, and salute it with an "Ave Maria," overcoming every human respect in doing her this act of homage.

#### EJACULATION.

"Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus."

"To sinners all, to me the chief,  
Send, Mother, send thy kind relief."

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#### Fifteenth Day.

#### CONSIDERATION UPON PARADISE.

What is it that pleases you in this world? Does liberty please you? Ah, if you went to Paradise, you might expatiate at your pleasure over the air, moon, stars, and sun. You would be able in a moment to transport yourself from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven; you could penetrate into places the most shut up, into corners the most secret, without obstacle and without fear.

Does music please you? But what sweet

music will be that of the Angels and Saints in Paradise ! One single instrument, touched only for a few moments by a seraph's hand, rapt St. Francis of Assisium into ecstasies beyond his senses.

Are you pleased at making a good appearance ? If you enter into bliss, your eyes will be like two stars, your countenance will resemble the sun, your hands will be adorned with gems, and your body will be all clothed with light !

Are you pleased with being a man of letters ? Go into Paradise, and, in a moment, you will become more learned than Solomon, more enlightened than all the philosophers. You will learn, in an instant, sciences most abstract and most sublime, without trouble and without fatigue.

Are you pleased with gazing in admiration upon the beauties of creatures ? But how much more beautiful must the Creator be ! And then you will see Him in Paradise face to face ; you will contemplate His countenance close at hand ; and, in a single glance, you will be happy. And what satisfaction too will it be to see the Angels ! To see Adam, Abraham, David, the Apostles, the Martyrs, your patron Saints ! To see JESUS, to see MARY !

Are you pleased with possessing goods ? Well, then, save yourself, and you will possess God Himself, the very Owner of all the goods in the world. He will be yours, and no one can take Him away from you ; and you cannot ever lose Him. He will be yours, and you will be His for ever, and for all eternity.

Fool that you are, if, for a shameful pleasure, you go and lose the great good of Paradise.



## EXAMPLE.

A little gift made to Mary has oftentimes gained Paradise, when forfeited for sinners the most dissolute. A noble youth of giddy nature (*Auriem. t. ii. p. 115*) was making a voyage from Genoa to Savona : in his ship there were three religious. He, being used to profane things, set about reading an obscene book of amorous verses ; and, as he read it, he said he felt so much delight, and so much pleasure in that little book, that he would not sell it for a pound. One of the religious said : " Would you dislike giving something to MARY ? " " No," answered he. " Come, then," replied the other, " will you, for the love of MARY, let this book be torn up and thrown into the sea ? " " Take it, father," said the youth. " No," replied he ; " do you make the gift to MARY." So the youth drew out his knife, and cut the book through the middle, and threw half into the sea ; and the other he gave to the religious, who tore it up into very small pieces, and threw it also into the water. This act did not remain unrewarded ; for having returned a few days after to Genoa, the youth was called by MARY to the safe harbour of religion ; and the good religious, with whom he had made the voyage, were spectators of the act. Oh, how would our Lady be pleased, if every one who had imitated this youth, in keeping and reading books like this, in which there is poison hidden, would make an offering of it to MARY, depriving himself of it for the love of her ! He might hope that she would obtain a change of life for him from her Son.

## ACT OF HOMAGE.

Look among your books, your pictures, and your writings, and see if you find any thing improper ; for the honour of MARY, throw it courageously into the fire.

## EJACULATION.

“ Janua cœli, ora pro nobis.”

“ To thee our love and troth are given ;  
Pray for us, pray, bright Gate of heaven.”

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## Sixteenth Day.

## CONSIDERATION UPON THE WAY TO PARADISE.

There are only two ways to Paradise, innocence and penance. As for innocence, what have I to do with it? I may say that I did not know it, even when I lost it. I lost it without knowing it, without bewailing it, without grieving ; perhaps I made others lose it too. Poor innocence ! lost so soon, for so little, and without remedy !

But, at all events, I have done penance for my sins. What penance? Who can tell if I have even confessed them exactly? Any penance set upon me for my sins, however light, seemed to me insupportable. Voluntary penance I have never done, or scarcely ever. Instead of sackcloth, fasting, retirement, and mortification, I have set myself to find every pleasure and every convenience I could.

And I wish to enter into Paradise! But by which way? I must enter it by one of the two; either that of innocence, or that of penance. By that of innocence I cannot enter; by that of penance, I will not. How, then, am I to save myself? For the present, let us settle the matter thus:

If I have not done penance hitherto, let me do it now. Let me put myself in the way to Paradise while I have time. Who knows how much longer I have to live? Perhaps it is a very short time; and yet with this very short time, and with a very little penance, I can gain Paradise for myself. Why, then, not do it?

#### EXAMPLE.

He that loses devotion to MARY, loses the way to Paradise. In this danger a youth (*Aurien.* t. i. p. 23), at first devoted to the service of the Blessed Virgin, found himself, having abandoned that devotion for a very dissolute life. One night he was troubled much by dreams, and having roused himself to find relief from his melancholy, he got out of bed, and took a profane book. Scarcely had he set about reading it, when he heard a loud knock at the door. It opened; and he saw a lady as tall as a giant, with a ghastly and terrible face; and her hands and feet ended in a beast's claws. He shuddered, and trembled all over at the sight. Having retired to a corner, he invoked the aid of the Blessed Virgin. "In vain," said the devil to him in that figure, "do you call upon her, who, being abandoned by you, has abandoned you."

You are now consigned to my dominion for such and such sins which you have committed (and he named them) ; soon you will be cast into hell." The poor youth, half dead, fell into a cold sweat, promised, with the usual offering of the Congregation, to return to his usual devotions. As he finished saying so, he saw the window of the chamber opened, and entering by it a venerable matron, with her face veiled, who made that beast depart ; and said to the youth, "*You have been in very great danger ; be of good courage ; go and make a confession, return at once to your devotion, and change your life.*" He went from his house betimes in the morning with great speed, and went to find the father who had the care of the Congregation. He, when he saw him so changed, that he appeared to have just come out of the tomb, and still more from the great stench which remained in his room, immediately believed his words, and received him anew ; he having already learnt, to his cost, the meaning of putting one's hand to the plough, and turning back.

## ACT OF HOMAGE.

Examine yourself concerning your devotion to MARY ; and if you find that you have grown cold in it, resume at once your former fervour.

## EJACULATION.

"Trahe me post te, sancta Mater."

"O Morning Star ! thy beauty be  
A light to draw my soul to thee."

## Seventeenth Day

CONSIDERATION ON DEVOTION TO THE VIRGIN  
MARY.

Devotion to MARY is a most efficacious devotion, since she is the Mother of God. Hence one has every reason to say, that she has in her hands all the treasures of the omnipotence, the grace, and the mercy of her Son. Is it possible that Jesus should deny any thing to a Mother so holy, who has given Him milk, watched Him, nourished Him, brought Him up; who has followed Him in His pilgrimages, even to the foot of the cross, and to the sepulchre itself? MARY loved Jesus above all things; and will not Jesus love MARY more than all?

It is a most sweet devotion, since she is our Mother. "*Our Lady*," says St. Joseph Cupertino, "*is my Mother, and the other mother is only my nurse.*" What a sweet thing to be able to say: "My Mother is Mother of Jesus, and my Mother. We are sons of one and the same Mother." Hence MARY always accompanies her graces with a maternal sweetness. She is not content with hearing us, she speaks to us and answers us in our heart with such a feeling of compunction, that often she makes us weep.

It is a most tender devotion, since she is the Mother of sinners. It is they who crucified her Jesus, and yet MARY loves them if they will repent. Loving them would be too little; she protests that she is their Mother: "*Ego sum Mater peccatorum.*" What joy does her heart

feel when she can reconcile these two brothers, these two sons of hers, the sinner and Jesus ! Are you a sinner ? You are able to give MARY a great pleasure. Throw down at her feet the knife with which you have pierced Jesus ; put it into her hands ; say to her, with a heart truly penitent, “ Mother of sinners, pray for me.”

## EXAMPLE.

Let not him deceive himself as being truly devout to MARY who lives obstinately in sin. A certain man of Valenciennes, in Flanders, in the year 1713, had the misfortune to fall into a most grievous sin (*Auriem.* t. ii. p. 27). Shame, however, assaulted him in such way, that on no account whatever could he induce himself to reveal it to his confessor. He confessed, however, other sins ; about this alone he preserved an obstinate silence. Meanwhile, his remorse of conscience was most bitter ; but to what advantage, if he neither wished nor knew how to free himself of it ? One day the thought came across him, that if he went to visit the church of MARY in Halle he would be free ; and he bound himself by a vow to do so, not at present with the design of making his confession, but with the hope that this act of homage would restore to him peace of conscience. He set off, and having arrived at the threshold of the church, he found himself stopped. He made an effort to enter, but could not ; he found himself immovable, but without knowing what held him there ; he examined himself closely to see whence the hindrance came, made a firm

resolution of making a good confession, and, this done, he was able to enter at once into the church without further obstacle. He had a confessor called, and with great grief disclosed his whole life to him; and returned home justified, and receiving a greater grace by this visit than he had asked for.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Recite the rosary in honour of our Lady; and if it prospers with you, invite others to keep you company.

#### EJACULATION.

“Mater amabilis, ora pro nobis!”

“We love thee, light of sinners’ eyes!  
Oh, let thy prayer for sinners rise!”

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#### Eighteenth Day.

#### CONSIDERATION ON THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

With whom are you now? You are with God. And when you walk, study, sleep, when you talk and when you eat, with whom are you? You are with God. And when you sin, with whom are you? You are still even then with God. He is before you, around you, within you, in every part of you; He sees every action you do, He hears every word you speak, He observes every feeling you have, measures every thought; He guards you by day, He stands over you at night, when you are alone, when you

are in company, at every time, in every place. You never said, then, "I can sin without blushing, nobody sees me." Ah, did nobody see you? Yes, God saw you.

How contemptuous, how insolent to sin in the face of God Himself; to sin in the face of a God so holy, a God so powerful! to sin under the eye of your Redeemer, your Father, your Spouse, your Judge! to be ashamed of a sin in the presence of man, and not to be ashamed of it in the presence of God! He has written in his heart the whole catalogue of your iniquities, and keeps reading and meditating upon them continually; and ever and anon stirs up His wrath by saying, "*Coram facie mea facta sunt.*" "Look, he has done them before my face!"

When you appear before His divine tribunal to be judged, you will not need any accuser or witnesses to convict you. "I," God will say, "am judge and witness." "*Ego sum iudex et testis.*" What confusion, then, for you to look at those terrible eyes, full of wrath against you, and yet to remember that these were spectators of those infamous and shameful actions! How great is the blindness of the Christian who sins in the sight of the devil, who has always an eye to accusing him; under the eye of an angel who cannot defend him; in the presence of God, who must judge him!

#### EXAMPLE.

If you wish yourself to go on rightly in what you do, imagine yourself often to be not only in God's presence, but also in that of MARY,



especially when there is a call upon you to do somewhat in honour of her. A youth in the city of Dola (*Auriem. t. i. p. 64*) one day fell in with the prefect of the Congregation, and was lovingly invited by him to go there; and he, in order not to appear discourteous, accepted the invitation, and I believe the thing would have ended there, it being the case that many similar promises are to be found in young men's mouths, if the Blessed Virgin had not given a helping hand. When things were in this state, this youth saw our Lady, who addressed him as follows: "*Do this, and you will do a thing agreeable to me, and I will never abandon you.*" Being at once frightened and encouraged at such a sight and at such a promise, he sought the Congregation with great eagerness, and obtained admission to it after many trials, they being afraid of his inconstancy and of the very bad life he had led hitherto. The issue shewed that his call was one by a voice more than human; for he lived with great purity and spirit; and where he had been before the scandal of those of the company, he became a mirror of virtue. Observe that pretty word that Mary used, "*I will never abandon you.*" This ought to draw every one to the like act of homage, and to confirm those in the Congregation in their good beginning.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Before beginning any action, and much more in temptations, repeat with yourself merely these simple words, "*God sees me.*"

## EJACULATION.

" Illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte."

" Look at us, Mother Mary! see  
How piteously we look to thee."

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## Nineteenth Day.

## CONSIDERATION UPON THE TWO PATRONS.

Reflect sincerely whom you wish to serve, God or the devil. Think well upon it, since you cannot serve the one and the other. To serve two enemies so irreconcilable as God and the devil, and to please both of them, is impossible. One day a penitent with the escutcheon of Jesus Christ, and another day a sinner with the livery of the devil; some prayers, a mass, a fast, and yet sinful affections and actions; this is a state perfectly agreeable to Lucifer; this is making open mockery of God.

If you wish to serve God, the suffering will be for a short time, the rejoicing for all eternity. Fifty, sixty years of mortification, and an eternity of joys. And besides, remember that a patron so good as God knows how to assist, to comfort, to caress you, even in this life. But if, in order to serve God, you must carry the cross, console yourself with thinking that it will never be so heavy as that which His innocent Divine Son carried.

If, however, you wish to serve the devil, the rejoicing will be short, and the suffering will last eternally. "Forty years of royalty," cried

Elizabeth of England after death, "and an eternity of hell!" And after all it is not true that the devil is able to satisfy in this world those who follow him. You have proved it, and prove it even now. The devil is a patron who hates you as much as ever an enemy can hate. What, then, can you expect of him?

#### EXAMPLE.

Who is more able to liberate us from the slavery of the devil than MARY? There was a youth (*Auriem.* t. ii. p. 276) who, being unable to succeed in a wicked design he had, gave himself up to the devil, binding himself to him for a slave in his own handwriting, if he would make him succeed in that at which he aimed. However, having repented of so doing, he went into a church of MARY, where, with great grief, he confessed his grievous sin, and was ready to do any penance that his confessor imposed upon him. He ordered him, before being absolved, first to fast for three days, to put on sackcloth, and to take the discipline, imploring the aid of our Lady; and he promised that for three days he would celebrate the holy Mass for him. After these three days were over, he went into the Holy Chapel by the advice of the same confessor; where, with many tears, he set about praying to our Lady that she might cause the writing to be restored to him; and while he said, "*Monstra te esse Matrem*"—"O most holy Mother, shew yourself to be a mother of love to me, though I am unworthy of being your Son, and am even a slave of the devil;" he saw descend into his hands the writing he had made. Then he gave him

self up more entirely than ever to tears of joy, and rendered many thanks to the Blessed Virgin; and after going out of the chapel, as happy as he could be, he went to the priest, shewed the favour he had received of MARY, and received absolution, with great hope of having received pardon. Thus, all that fear left him, which he had great reason to entertain, owing to the bill of promise remaining in the devil's hands.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Kiss three times the image of MARY, and say each time affectionately to it, "I wish to serve you, my Mother, and to disown the devil."

#### EJACULATION.

"O Domina, servus tuus sum ego!"

"I am thy slave; nor would I be,  
For worlds, from this sweet bondage free."

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### Twentieth Day.

#### CONSIDERATION UPON DELAYING CONVERSION.

Have you the intention of being converted? Are you intending to give yourself to God some day? Yes, certainly. But when? to-day? Oh, not to-day. I have got an engagement to get over, an attachment, a human respect, a habit, a passion; but to-day I perceive it will be too hard a task; I will do it some other time. But when? I will wait till this obstacle is removed, till the passion gives way, till youth is over. I will do it, without fail, at these exercises next year. How long you have been say-

ing so, and yet you have never done any thing yet !

You put off, you wait; and will God be likely to wait for you? Who can say? And do you leave settling the affairs of your salvation under such uncertainty? But God has waited for me hitherto. This is just the reason why I doubt if He will wait for you any longer; He is tired with your promises and your infidelity. But God is good. With you He has been so quite enough already. Who knows if now He will not begin to be severe? and if He is willing to continue being good with you, is that any reason why you should be willing to continue offending Him? Do consider what black ingratitude this is !

Nearly all the Christians that are in hell have plunged themselves into it by waiting and putting off. Nobody is so stupid as to say, I have no wish to be converted; but few are so wise as to say, I wish to be converted this moment. So death comes, and yet even then they keep putting off; they hope to get well of their complaint this day, this hour. Only think, if it is likely that that which has not been done at a suitable time, should get done at a time when God will mock them, as they have done Him their whole life long. Bethink yourself well, then. If you do not change your life at once, there is good reason to fear that you will never change it at all.

#### EXAMPLE.

Even those who have amended their ways in their lifetime, have reason to fear at the point

of death. Think, then, how matters will stand with those who put off their conversion till that moment. There once was a person of this kind (*Auriem.* t. ii. p. 317), as careful in his domestic affairs as he was negligent in those of his soul. With this avarice of his there were many other vices conjoined. Still he had a great devotion to Mary, and recited the holy rosary. One day, as he went into her chapel to pray, he heard a voice say, "*James, render to me and to my Son the same exact account of every minute, that you make your servants render you.*" James, being in the mire of his sins, did not care at all for these words; but the Mother of mercy did the same again. At this he entered into himself, and began to examine his own goings on exactly; and finding himself a great debtor to God and his Mother, mended his life in good earnest; and he who before made no conscience of the most grievous things, had now a very delicate conscience about the smallest, remembering what God said by the mouth of the prophet, "I will judge justice." With such dispositions and tenour of life he drew near to the end of his days. Then he saw many devils, and heard them accuse him of all his sins (and they were grievous and many), and pressing the supreme Judge to have him given up to themselves, as having many times merited hell. The poor dying man was in great fear about his salvation, when the Mother of mercy appeared to him, and bade the Archangel St. Michael put into one scale the acts of homage done to honour her, and into the other the sins of his past life now confessed; and since the former outweighed

these, the devils fled, and James was led by our most holy Mother into Paradise.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

If you have a mortal sin on your mind, go at once and confess it; if in a state of grace, consider what is the greatest hindrance to your giving yourself wholly to God, and overcome it speedily.

#### EJACULATION.

“ Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, I am yours in heart and soul.”

“ O Jesus, Joseph, Mary, deign  
My soul in heavenly ways to train.”

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#### Twenty-first Day.

#### CONSIDERATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION.

Do you sin, and not go presently to confession? And yet, if you are ill, you call in a physician; a sign that you prize the health of the body more than that of the soul. But if you die in your sin without confession, woe to you for all eternity! Meantime while you put off confession, sin strikes root in the soul; it becomes a habit, it grows into a nature. A solemn time comes, Easter is here; and then only you go to confession. So, then, you must die at Easter, or at some solemn time, if you mean to be saved!

You do not sin, and that is why you do not go to confession. However, for all that, you

commit venial sins every day. What a great debt to make satisfaction for in the fire of purgatory ! You might disburden yourself of them by a frequent confession, and you do not care to do so ; you are, then, behindhand in the interests of the soul. You would not venture to appear in public with a single spot of dirt upon your face without washing yourself ; and yet, with so many spots upon your soul, you dare to present yourself every day without blushing before the eyes of the whole of heaven !

You will say, I have tried going often to confession, and am only just the same as I was. But have you ever tried making a good confession ? If after examining yourself, grieving, making resolution, and confessing, you fall into sin, how will it turn out when you give up doing any thing of the kind ? Oh, if one of the damned had the opportunity of confessing that you have ! Yet a time will come, when even you will wish to be able to make a good confession, and will not be able.

EXAMPLE.

If you reflected that God may punish you in your sin, you would not put off confessing it so long. A youth of Mexico (*Auriem.* t. i. p. 58), in the year 1611, though he frequented the Congregation, yet allowed himself to be induced, by bad company, to consent to a grievous sin. He arranged the time and the place with his companions, and went with them to put the infamous design into execution. There met him in the street a grave man with a majestic look (I



should think it was his Angel Guardian), who was seen by himself only, and not by his companions, who drew close up to him, and gave him a great blow on the breast, saying: "You that are a brother of the Congregation, dare you commit such wickedness as this?" At this he fell half dead on to the ground. His companions ran up to him quickly, cheered him, and asked him what was the matter. He replied, "Lead me to a confessor;" he would say no more. His companions, though their thoughts were running in another direction, yet, not to distress him, made the best of their way with him to a church, where he called a confessor. He told him all that had happened, and then made a devout confession, and kept a pure conscience for the rest of his life. Blessed be the hand which drew him from sin, which put him again into the right path to virtue, and by striking his breast gave him compunction at heart!

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Examine yourself about your confessions, and resolve to correct your defects.

#### EJACULATION.

"Mater divinæ gratiæ, ora pro nobis!"

"Sweet Stewardess of God, thy prayers  
We beg, who are God's ransom'd heirs."

**Twenty-second Day.**

**CONSIDERATION ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE  
EUCCHARIST.**

What honour Jesus Christ has done me in this Sacrament! He makes Himself in the Eucharist my friend, my guest, my spouse; He nourishes me from His Flesh and His Blood; He transforms me wholly into Himself. My bosom becomes then more sacred than church, altars, chalices, or consecrated vessels. My soul may then call itself a Paradise, since the King of glory sojourns in it!

But what dishonour do I shew to Jesus in that Sacrament! To address myself to my Spouse with such coldness, to abandon Him so soon, to thank Him never, to shun meeting Him in procession, to visit Him never, I may almost say, in churches, to laugh and jest in His presence in public, even when exposed upon the altars—can one treat Him with greater disrespect? Indeed there may be greater; and perhaps I have committed it, by receiving Him in a body unclean with sins, with a sacrilegious mouth, like that of Judas, and in a soul as full of devils as is hell.

What graces does Jesus Christ give me in the Eucharist! Graces against the passions to weaken them; against the devil to affright him; against the deceits of the world to wean me from them. This food of life fortified the martyrs, encouraged the virgins, made the saints.

I am, then, a fool, if I take no care about these graces. Whence comes it that I find myself

so weak in temptations, and that I never take a single step in the path of virtue? I say that I do not approach Jesus Christ through respect, and yet I have no difficulty in dishonouring Him in His churches and before His altars. I say that I am not worthy to receive Him; why then not make myself worthy at once by a pure and spotless life?

#### EXAMPLE.

MARY has a particular care that her devout servants may not die without the Sacraments. In Louvain (*Auriem. t. ii. p. 162*), in the year 1621, there was a sick priest, whose complaint, however, was not judged by the physicians to be dangerous, when he suddenly called his sister, and ordered her to get the sacred Viaticum sent him. Those in the house made a great resistance, telling him not to vex himself about it yet, since the complaint was not one to cause him any anxiety; to whom he said, "*Be quick; for death, far off as you think it, is close at hand; I have scarce two hours to live.*" At these words they marvelled, it not seeming to them as if he was so near his end; so they took it very leisurely, which the sick man took notice of, and replied, "*Be quick; I shall die as I have said; for the Virgin Mary has appeared to me, and told me to hold myself ready to depart for Paradise, and to make my communion first.*" His sister obeyed at once; and the people of the house having called the parish priest, he received the Sacraments with great devotion, and with his faculties perfect. At the second hour, as the Virgin had told him, he died.

## ACT OF HOMAGE.

If you cannot communicate this morning, at all events make a spiritual communion in honour of the most holy MARY, and in reparation for communions hitherto ill made.

## EJACULATION.

“ Ave verum corpus, natum ex Maria Virgine.”

“ O Virgin-born, O flesh divine,  
Cleanse us, and make us wholly Thine.”

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## Twenty-third Day.

## CONSIDERATION ON THE INSPIRATIONS OF GOD.

God calls us by His inspirations, and oh, in how many ways He calls us ! At one time with deep impulses and lively recognitions of eternal truths ; at another, with private hints insinuated into the ear by a friend, or by a confessor ; at another, by hints in public, by chastisements, preachers, and spiritual books. A converted sinner seems to say to our heart, Change your life ; a sudden death replies to us, Confess, confess ; a continual disquietude preaches to us, Come, dismiss that habit ; an unexpected sweetness makes us exclaim, Oh, how sweet it is to serve God ! God calls us, but it depends upon us to obey His calls. The Holy Spirit is truly a light that cheers, He is a ray that fructifies, a physician that cures ; but He recovers those that wish to be cured ; He fructifies those hearts that open

their interior to Him, and refreshes those souls that do not close their windows to the sun's light. Grace wishes us to be saved, but not saved in spite of ourselves; wishes us to be saints, but not saints by force. But what are you to say of those who leave a preacher, a confessor, or a spiritual book, because it hits them hard, because it stings them? This is not only disobeying, but downright rebellion against the Holy Spirit.

God calls us, but woe to us if we do not respond at once to His calls! St. Matthew had scarcely heard himself called by Jesus Christ, when he rose up and followed Him, and of a publican became an apostle; St. Peter, at a single glance from his Master, broke into tears of penitence, was converted, and became a saint; Judas, at admonitions, at reproaches, at remorse, did not give in; he despaired, and was damned. The first inspiration which you reject, that which you feel now, may be the last extraordinary grace which God will send you. If God calls you to a state of life, and you do not say yes at once, He perhaps, being offended, will not let you hear His voice any more. You will take up a state at your own humour, and then what will become of you?

#### EXAMPLE.

Happy he that responds at once to the calls of God! One of MARY'S Congregation in Bologna had a striking proof of this. This person (*Auriem.* t. ii. p. 163) went one day to find the father who had the charge of the Congregation, and told him that he felt a strong desire for

a change of life : so he prayed him to help him, “ And who knows, father,” said he, “ if I may not die unexpectedly ? ” The tears and the feeling with which he said this were signs of an efficacious will. He further gave him a great deal of good advice, and enjoined him to frequent the Sacraments, at all events on all the feasts. He obeyed ; and two months had not passed, before he went one feast-day straight off to the hospital to wait on the sick, and gave the poor pilgrims a large alms ; he returned home to dinner, went up the steps, and before the hall-door he felt himself faint, was going to sit down, and just said, Jesus and MARY, and expired !

ACT OF HOMAGE.

Imagine yourself about to die, and think what would give you most remorse, if you found yourself at that point this moment ; and resolve to cure yourself of it at once, imploring for that purpose the aid of MARY.

EJACULATION.

“ Doce me, Domina, facere voluntatem tuam.”

“ O thou, dear Mistress of my heart,  
What thou wouldst have me do impart.”

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Twenty-fourth Day.

CONSIDERATION UPON VENIAL SIN.

It is said, in an off-hand way, that venial sin is no great evil. But offending God is never a

light thing. A God so great, a Father so good, a Spouse so pure, a Redeemer so merciful, cannot be offended by a Christian wilfully, without the highest rashness and ingratitude. Would it seem to you a slight thing that the whole world should be reduced to ashes? Or what would you say if the whole of Paradise was to be cast into the abyss? And yet a single venial sin is a much greater evil, as being an offence of God.

To commit a sin in a passion, from want of reflection, may be excusable; but to know that a certain lie or act of disobedience is a venial sin, and to commit it willingly again and again, this is as much as saying, "This little satisfaction to myself pleases me more, than offending God displeases me." And yet to displease Him habitually, to disobey Him at every turn, at every little occasion, without making any account of it, without trying to get the better of it, what a continual embittering of a Father's heart! What disregard, what contempt for Him in the heart of a Son! If there were no hell, you would, with the same readiness, commit any atrocity, since it is plain that you make no account of God.

But if you go on so, you will fall, sooner or later, into mortal sin too. How long, think you, will God dwell with a soul which is continually displeasing Him? And yet are you not aware that every day your strength is diminishing, and that you will fear death and hell less and less; and that God keeps retreating from you? Often you are upon the confines of mortal sin: you do not know yourself whether you have passed them: who can be

sure that you have not committed it? You wish to be saved, and yet are always walking on the brink of the precipice.

EXAMPLE.

How many failings that may seem light ones, either from want of reflection or from age, nevertheless are highly displeasing to the Virgin. In Douay, in the church of St. Peter (*Aurien.* t. i. p. 44), there is in the outer wall a statue of our Lady, before which some lads had begun to play rudely at a time when certain persons, who were passing that way, had prostrated themselves to pray. The Blessed Virgin wished to shew how much she was displeased with the little respect they bore her; the statue moved, and lifted up its arm, as if about to strike the boys at play. Some of these youths, perhaps the more modest of the set, perceived it, and, turning to their companions, said: "*Don't you see that our Lady has lifted up her arm, and is going to strike us, because we are at play here before her?*" All of them were frightened when they saw the miracle, and they went in haste to their own homes to give an account of it to their relations, and in less than half an hour there was a great concourse to see the wonder; and those good people to repair the affront offered to the statue of MARY, for eight days together went, with great devotion and in great numbers, to visit it, and to beg pardon for the irreverence of those youths; and she, in token that she was appeased, wrought many miracles upon that occasion.



## ACT OF HOMAGE.

Behave with particular modesty in church, always keeping your eyes upon the ground at the time of the Holy Sacrifice.

## EJACULATION.

“Munda me ab omni iniquitate mea, sancta Dei Genitrix.”

“Thou who wert pure as driven snow,  
Make me as thou wert here below.”

## Twenty-fifth Day.

## CONSIDERATION ON PURGATORY.

What goes on in purgatory? Men are burnt in a great fire kindled by Divine justice. They love God, yet are punished by God. They desire to see Him, and cannot; they expect the moment for going into Paradise, and know not when it will arrive. They suffer torments much greater than all the torments of the world, but by force, without merit, and without recompense. Oh, wondrous: the mere apprehension of a prison will put you into deep melancholy; you will probably go into purgatory, and yet take no care about it.

For what reason are souls sent to purgatory? A nun went there for something said in a whisper in choir; a religious for not bowing his head at the “Gloria Patri” at the end of the Psalms; a holy virgin for washing her face with too

much nicety upon a Friday; St. Peregrinus and St. Paschasius for the very smallest faults; St. Valerius, Bishop of Augusta, for a little too much affection towards his nephew; a holy preacher for some excessive attachment to his own writings (*Catan, Buon-mort*, p. iii. disc. 25); and so, many others. What, then, will become of you for so many passions, lies, acts of disobedience, of irreverence in church, negligence in your duties, idle words, vain attachments, fallings short in charity? And yet you do not think of amending yourself.

How long are souls in purgatory? How long will you be there? Let us give to each venial sin one day only in purgatory, and suppose that each day you commit thirty faults. Therefore, to every day of your life thirty days of purgatory will answer; to every year, thirty years, to fifty, one thousand five hundred years, to sixty, one thousand eight hundred years. Immortal God, what an astonishing payment! Add to the venial sins some mortal sin, absolved indeed, as far as the guilt goes, but not paid for entirely as far as the punishment goes. How many other centuries of years in purgatory! In the mean time you may wipe off the whole account with small mortifications in this life, and yet you take no care about it.

#### EXAMPLE.

The blessed Rainier the Cistercian (*Auriem.* t. ii. p. 327) stood in great fear of his past life, not knowing if the Lord had pardoned him his faults, and the punishment due for them, and often prayed our Lady to have compassion upon

him. So one time, when he was praying, he was rapt into ecstacy, and heard MARY praying to Jesus in his behalf, supplicating Him to lead him to heaven without going to purgatory, as one who was of a heart that was penitent for his sins, and had done the penance due for them : to whom the Son said : " My Mother, I put the matter into your hands." Who can describe the comfort Rainier felt at such an answer? What fear could he have any longer of purgatory, from which so few are exempt, while his cause was left in his most holy Mother's hands? Yet he did not for this chill one whit in his spiritual life, but attended to piety and the exercises of religion with fervour. In this manner this blessed Mother procures that her good children shall not suffer these sharp pains.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Recite three times the "De profundis" for that soul in purgatory which in life was most devout to the Virgin.

#### EJACULATION.

" Virgo potens, ora pro nobis!"  
 " O Queen of heaven! obtain for me  
 Thy glory there one day to see."

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#### Twenty-sixth Day.

#### CONSIDERATION ON JESUS AS A BABE.

Mark well the poverty of this Divine Infant. Of what is He in want? Of every thing! He is in want of a house; He must needs go to a

stable. He is in want of a bed ; He must needs stretch Himself on a handful of straw. He is in need of fire ; He must warm Himself at the breath of two animals. He is in want even of swaddling-clothes ; Joseph must cover Him with his tattered cloak. Jesus so poor, and you so in love with riches !

Consider, too, His mortification. What a delicate little body is this ! What cold it has to suffer in so severe a season ! What discomfort must it experience on those prickly straws ! How many inconveniences come to its share out of its father's house ! And yet from that lip no cry at all is heard ; from those eyes not one tear even starts. Jesus so mortified, and you greedy after every pleasure !

Note, finally, that humiliation of His. How was Jesus born ? In the deepest silence of the night, and in a place among the most unknown. By whom is He served ? He has no servants ; His father and His mother are those who serve Him. To whom does He make Himself known ? Only to some poor shepherds. What figure does He make in the world ? That of a poor beggar, who does not find any one to lodge Him one single night for charity. How is this ? Jesus so humble, and you so jealous of being respected ! Come, Christian, to the cradle of the babe Jesus to be judged. Listen to that stable, to that straw, which condemns you.

EXAMPLE.

A little girl, of seven years old (*Auriem. t. i. p. 131*), hearing the beauties of Jesus Christ recounted, was inflamed with an ardent desire

of seeing Him. With great naturalness and simplicity, she went to pray MARY to be so gracious as to shew Him to her once only; but as the favour she asked was no ordinary one, she was not soon heard. She continued this prayer of hers for the space of seven years, practising herself from time to time in doing acts of love towards her spouse, who had smitten her heart. The wounds of love, says the devout John of the Cross, are not made, except by the presence of the beloved. The little girl kept always knocking at MARY's gate, to receive the health which the Son's visit would give her. One holy Christmas night, a night to her most happy, she, quite inflamed with this wish, retired into the Oratory, and put up her most fervent prayers that the favour might be granted her, when she saw the blessed Mother, with the Child in her arms, and heard her say, "Take Him, my daughter, and converse with Him." The devout little maiden took Him, and as she held Him in her arms, was asked by Him if she loved Him. "Yes, Lord, I love you much," she answered. "How much?" said Jesus. "More than my body," she answered. "Do you really wish me well?" replied the holy Babe. "I love you more than my heart," said she. "And how much," replied He, "do you love me?" "Lord," said she, "I have not words to tell you; my heart speaks this." She could not, after such an excess of love, and a sight so great, keep in this life any longer; her heart broke, and the Virgin MARY took that soul, and with celestial harmony conducted it to Paradise.

ACT OF HOMAGE.

Make a habit of writing, in front of all you write, these sweet words: "All hail, Jesus! Mary, all hail!" Or else utter these names before you set about your business, intending to invoke their assistance in your employments.

EJACULATION.

"Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui nobis  
post hoc exilium ostende."

"O Queen of heaven! on that bright day  
To me thy womb's chaste Fruit display."

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Twenty-seventh Day.

CONSIDERATION ON THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST  
WHEN YOUNG.

Christ, when young, was always obedient to MARY and to Joseph. The Son of God obeyed two creatures; and in what? In all the most humble offices of labouring, sweeping, sawing; that He might be thought in all respects to be a carpenter's son. And in what way did He obey? With pleasure, with readiness, with submission. Oh, what a reproof for my disobedience to my betters!

Christ, when young, was always employed in work and in prayer. But what reason had He to be afraid of ease? If He had been tempted, was he in any danger of yielding to temptation? No, certainly not; He wished to shew frail an

feeble youths by example what to do in order to avoid temptations. Oh, what a reproach to my love of ease!

Christ, when young, appeared outwardly more holy as He grew in years. He appeared more holy not only before God, but before men also, in order to shew us that we ought to grow even in exterior holiness, for the edification of our neighbour. But He appeared more holy, first, to the eyes of God, and then to those of men, to teach us that our first object should be that of pleasing God. Oh, what a reproach to my scanty growth in holiness, to the bad example I often set, and to my human respect!

#### EXAMPLE.

Dominica of Paradise, of the sacred order of St. Dominic, was an imitator of Christ's obedience, and in reward for this had singular favours from the Holy Virgin. It is said, in her life (*Aurium*. t. ii. p. 321), that when she was but a child she saw the Mother of God, who gave her these instructions: "Live at home obedient to your mother (her father was dead), spend your time there with your own family; be so cautious, humble, and quiet, as not to give occasion to any one for quarrels and disturbances; rather take a burning coal on to your tongue than tell a lie; keep silence much, and speak little; open your eyes to heaven, and shut them to all the vanities of the world. Take care not only never to touch any body else, but not even to look at or touch yourself or any of your relations; beware of all sins; and to avoid mistake, do nothing without first having the consent of Jesus."

Thus said the holy Mother, and the good and simple child listened readily ; but when she had need to wash her hands, she, in her simplicity, covered her right hand with a white cloth, and plunging it in the water, with her hand thus covered up, she washed the other hand, her face, and arms ; and when her elder sister wanted to wash her head, Dominica would not consent to it ; yet finding herself once obliged to let it be done, she went to ask help of MARY, who told her not to use any longer this over-particularity in washing herself, nor make resistance to her sister in necessary matters ; this not having been her intention in the advice she gave her. Not long after, her mother, whose name was Constance, gave her some cloth, and told her to make herself a dress of it. At these words the child was in great confusion, inasmuch as she had had orders from MARY to obey her mother, and on the other hand did not know how to sew or to cut out, she having been used to work in the field ; so she had recourse to the Blessed Virgin, who taught her how to make a dress. “ But, Lady,” said Dominica, “ if I do not see, I shall never learn.” Oh, how kind is MARY, Mother of Him of whom it is written, *His discourse is with the simple !* The Blessed Virgin took the scissors into her hand, and began cutting the cloth and sewing it with the needle too. The child soon learnt the art of sewing so well, that though she was but a poor country girl, she knew this trade excellently. But as she was of a tender age, she did not easily get to manage the scissors ; so the Virgin blessed her hands, saying, “ Now try it ; I have taught you,” and she vanished. What think you of



the tender love of MARY, who did the office of a mother for Dominica in reward of her obedience?

ACT OF HOMAGE.

Never be idle; and if you have nothing else to do, read some book that treats of the praises of MARY.

EJACULATION.

“ Monstra te esse Matrem.”

“ Mother of God! to me no less  
Vouchsafe a mother's sweet caress.”

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Twenty-eighth Day.

CONSIDERATION OF CHRIST'S EXAMPLE IN THE  
DESERT.

Christ in the desert teaches me a retired life by His solitude. He has no fear of objects to deceive Him, of companions to seduce, of discourses to pervert, of creatures to overthrow Him; and yet, notwithstanding this, He flies from the town into the desert. Why, then, am I, who am so weak in every little conflict with things and creatures, for ever seeking conversation?

Christ in the desert teaches me the mortification of the flesh with His fast. To what purpose forty whole days without taking a mouthful of food or a cup of water, and living meanwhile with beasts, and sleeping upon the bare ground? yet His flesh is perfectly subject to the spirit, and He unable to sin by nature.

What a difference there is between the guiltless Christ and a man such as I am, conceived in sin, inclined to sin, and perhaps actually a sinner ! He fasted forty days with such rigour ; and I, perhaps, do not observe even the fasts of the Church, or else try to observe them with the least rigour I can.

Christ in the desert taught me the use of frequent prayer by his continual praying. But what had He need to ask for ? Not grace, since He could not lose it ; not virtue, for He had all the fulness of it ; not learning, since He is the very Wisdom of the Father. And do I, with so many needs, make such short prayers, and make them by force, with so little recollection and with so much distraction ?

EXAMPLE.

Prayer made in honour of her pleases MARY ; but mortification of the flesh pleases her much more. There was in Sardinia (*Aurim.* t. ii. p. 27) a girl of twelve years old, who was exhorted by her mother, who was very devout to MARY, to recite the rosary every day, and fast on Saturday, in honour of her. As for the rosary, in that the child obeyed ; but not so in the fast, excusing herself as unable to observe it. Her mother pressed it, saying it was no such great thing to fast once a week. Still her daughter clung to her refusal, alleging a pretended " I can't," for the real " I won't," which is often the way with excuses ; until one night, when she was asleep, she heard some one call her by name, looked to see who called her, and saw it was our Lady, from whom she heard the fol-

lowing words : "*Obey your mother, and fast on the Saturday : if you do so, I will help you in your needs.*" Upon this she immediately began the fast ; and the event shewed that the vision was not a vain one ; for having followed this devotion for the space of thirty years, she found Mary ever propitious to her, and at hand to assist her.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Be as much retired as you can, and observe silence, particularly in school and at your work.

#### EJACULATION.

"Pone, Domina, custodiam ori meo."

"Be love of thee, my whole life long,  
A seal upon my wayward tongue."

### Twenty-ninth Day.

#### CONSIDERATION ON JESUS CRUCIFIED.

*Vide bonitatem Dei.* Contemplate, O my soul, the goodness of your God in Jesus crucified ! The Father sacrifices His only-begotten Son, and the Only-begotten sacrifices Himself for your salvation. A single drop of that blood was enough to save you ; but His goodness prompts Him to pour it all out to the very last drop. He had, besides, imprisonment, blows, spitting, scourges, a crown of thorns, nails, blasphemies, wormwood, and gall. He loved more than all, and for this reason He was the most vile and most despised of all.

*Vide severitatem Dei.* Consider, my soul, the justice of thy God in Jesus crucified. How came the Son of God to be condemned to death, and to a death so ignominious? It was for the sins of the world. But the sins are not His. Still that does not signify; He, if He has taken them upon His shoulders, has paid for them. But He is innocence and sanctity itself. That does not signify; He is guilty of the sins of others, and this is enough to cause Him to be crucified. But He is the Only-begotten of the Father. That does not signify; He assumes the character of a sinner, so He dies between the thieves, He dies abandoned in fine by His Father, He dies like a criminal! What an execrable monster, what a barbarous and pitiless butcher is sin!

*Vide bonitatem et severitatem Dei.* Learn from hence, my soul, two great truths for yourself. Great need have you to say that your salvation is a thing of much importance, if the Son of God came to His death for its sake upon a cross. But woe to you if you are damned! If by the Divine justice the most innocent Jesus Christ was so scourged for the sins of others, how will you be dealt with in hell for sins, your own, so many in number, and committed with such great malice! O divine blood shed for my sins, obtain for me the pardon of my sins; O crucified Jesus, save me!

## EXAMPLE.

A blood-stained man, full of enormous crimes, was earnestly entreated by his wife (*Aur. t. ii, p. 266*) to fast on Saturday in honour of MARY, and

to recite an "Ave Maria" to her when he fell in with any image of her, since he was not disposed to bring himself down to penance. He did so, perhaps more to please his wife than for anything else ; nevertheless from this devotion his felicity took its beginning. One day on a journey, he entered into a church to refresh himself from the heat ; he saw an image of MARY, and, without much devotion, he said an "Ave Maria." As he drew back, he perceived that the infant Jesus, who was in the arms of His holy Mother, was wounded all over, and bathed in blood : he shuddered at such a sight, and turning to the Virgin, he said, "*Who has ill-treated your Son in this way ?*" "*You,*" replied she, "*with your sins have wounded the Son of God and my Son.*" At these words, this man began to weep exceedingly, and prayed the Virgin, with many sobs, to obtain his pardon. But the holy Infant shewed no wish to hear His Mother's prayers. Then the Virgin redoubled her entreaty, and said, "But what can be denied to Mary?" She received the grace, and said to him : "*Kiss the wounds of my Son.*" He, all trembling, and with many tears, approached to kiss them, and he seemed to see that upon this act the Infant's wounds were healed by his contrition. This done, he went out of the church, and also out of the world, since, by common consent, he and his wife both retired to take to a religious life.

#### ACT OF HOMAGE.

Say often in the day, "*Christ is crucified, I am greatly bles d!*"

## EJACULATION.

“ Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
Crucifixi fige plagas  
Cordi meo valide.”

“ Write on my heart’s most secret core  
The five dear Wounds that Jesus bore.”

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## Thirtieth Day.

CONSIDERATIONS ON MARY’S DOLOURS AT THE  
FOOT OF THE CROSS.

Of the swords that pierced MARY’S heart these are the three sharpest. The first, to lose the most beautiful, most holy, and most innocent Son that ever was : a most sore affliction ! To see her Only-begotten, with His veins open, His feet and hands pierced through, dying between two robbers, just in the flower of His age · a most sore torment ! But for whom this blood ? For a Catholic, perhaps for you, who, after all this expenditure, wish to go to be damned after all. Ah, it is this which is a grief above grief, which wounds her heart, leaving it no comfort. *What use*, she keeps repeating, ah, *what use !*

The second. To see the blood of her Son not only uselessly spilt for so many Christians, but moreover to know that it will serve them for a second hell, to their greater torment ! Oh, what pain ! To know that this blood will form the accusation, the reproach, the condemnation of so many sinners, who are, besides all this, her

sons too! To lose her Jesus, and not to save you! to see you, even for this, more tormented! Poor Mother, who will be able to console you any more!

The third. That Christians make no account of this Divine blood, as though He had shed it easily. But, after all, why should man abuse it so greatly? ah, this is too much! If the Son of MARY had not died for you, perhaps you would have sinned less. You sin from the confidence you have in that blood! You go on sinning till death, from the hope that that blood must save you. And so many are not content with this, but despise it, blaspheme it, curse it. Oh, unfortunate Mother! Oh, cruel you, if you will not shew compassion on her!

#### EXAMPLE.

There was a rich nobleman, immersed in many enormous sins (*Auriem.* t. ii. p. 182), who, though pressed by a mortal infirmity, did not give his soul a thought. St. Bridget had admonished him, and with many tears had much and often besought the Lord fervently that this obstinate man might be converted; and she knocked so much at the gate of the Divine mercy, that the Lord appeared to her, and told her to send a priest to the sick man to exhort him to repentance. This priest went and returned three times without doing any good; but at last, by the help of God's grace, so pierced his heart, that the sick man cried out: "*Shall I obtain pardon of God, when for sixty years I have had no acquaintance either with confessors or Sacraments? I that have*

*given myself wholly to the devil, and have promised and sworn fealty to him, and have had close intercourse with him. Now I feel myself quite an altered man ; I wish to go to confession, and hope that God will pardon me."* Having done this with many tears, that very day he confessed four times. The following he took the Viaticum ; and on the sixth died with the greatest devotion. When he was dead, our Lord appeared to St. Bridget, and told her, the converted soul was in purgatory, and I expect it soon in Paradise. At these words the Saint was astonished beyond measure, to think that a man of such a bad life should merit the great grace of dying contrite. And the Lord added : " Know, then, daughter, that my Mother has locked the gates of hell for him ; for although he did not love her ever heartily, still his habit was frequently to call to mind her dolours ; and to feel compassion for her as often as he heard her mentioned, and to think about her ; and so he is saved."

## ACT OF HOMAGE.

Offer to MARY all the troubles you may have to bear to-day, as a comfort for her dolours.

## EJACULATION.

" Fac ut tecum lugeam."

" Oh, give me tears to shed with thee  
Beneath the Cross on Calvary."



## Thirty-first Day.

## CONSIDERATION ON THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

Do you wish to love? Oh, then, do love; but the person most worthy of love: love Jesus Christ. See,—He too is a man, and of all men the most beautiful, *speciosus forma præ filiis hominum*. But, since He is also God, as God, His beauty is infinite. You love even a carriage, a clock, a picture, a box, because they are beautiful. And Jesus, what can compare with Him? And yet Jesus is not loved.

You do not love Jesus, and Jesus loves you. He loves you so, that from His very birth all His thoughts have been about your salvation. For you He was a little babe in a cradle; for you an artisan in a shop; for you a preacher amid a thousand discomforts; for you He endured blows, spittle, derision, prison, scourges; for you He shed all His blood; for you He died. Does this seem to you but little?

Indeed it did appear so to Him. He wished besides to leave Himself entire to you; His Body for your food, and His Blood for your drink. What more would you have to make you love Him? A little dog that sports round about you, or a babe that smiles upon you, ravishes (it seems) your love by force. It is only to Jesus, who loves you with infinite love, that you cannot respond.

But what? it seems to you perhaps too familiar to say to Jesus: "*Lord, I love you.*" Ah, but yet say it to Him, with confidence, for this

is just that which He desires. But even if you were a sinner, you ought not on that account to avoid Him. Notice how He is the first to run to meet you, and to open His bosom to you, and to shew you His heart, and to cry to you, "*Love Me, love Me!*" If you were not made of rock, how could you resist such an invitation!

## EXAMPLE.

Dominica of Paradise, of whom we have lately made mention, having offered, one Saturday, two crowns of flowers to JESUS and MARY, and prostrated herself upon the ground, prayed instantly to JESUS and MARY to smell them; and when she saw that she did not receive the favour, she thought her own demerits were the reason of it, and that it was because she had given no alms then. She rose up from prayer, and went to the window to see for some poor man; she saw, in a beggar's dress, a lady of grave aspect, who carried in her arms a little child; he, with uplifted hands, asked alms of her; the lady did the same. The little girl noticed in the hands of the little child certain wounds, and, moved to compassion, said to them, "Wait a little while for me." She went to get something that she meant to give them, and presently she saw in the house the poor persons she had left outside. "Oh, who has opened the door for you? woe to me if my mother sees you!" "Do not be afraid," said the lady; "no one has seen us." "But how," replied Dominica, "does your son walk so easily, and yet I see two wounds in his feet?" "Love was the cause of them," answered the lady.

Dominica was astonished, meantime, to see the modesty of this little child, and asked him, "Do not the wounds hurt you?" He smilingly answered, "What?" and looking steadily upon the two images crowned with flowers, with eyes and with finger begged them for his mother. She took the flowers, smelt them, and gave them to the child to smell, and turning to Dominica; "What moved you," said she, "my dear little girl, to crown these images with roses?" "The love," said she, "which I bear to Jesus and His Mother." "How much do you love them?" answered the lady. "As much as I can," replied she. "How much can you love?" "As much as He helps me to do," said Dominica. "It follows, then," replied the lady, "that God will repay you for it in Paradise."

Dominica could not look enough, first at one, and then at the other. And the lady said, "What are you looking at?" "Your son," said Dominica; and drawing herself quite close up to him, she perceived a most sweet smell, which came forth from his wounds. "And what ointment is it you apply to the wounds of your son," asked she, "that they smell so sweet?" "The ointment of charity," replied she. "And where is it sold?" "It is gained," said the lady, "with faith, love, and works." Then the little girl took a piece of cloth to dry up the wound which she saw in the breast of the child, from which a still greater fragrance came forth. But the lady would not let her; and he too drew back. "Come here, my dear," said Dominica, "and I will give you some bread." "His food is love," answered

the lady; "draw him with this, if you wish to do something acceptable to him, and to make him pleased." At these words the little child began to be joyful, and said to Dominica, "How much do you love Jesus?" "I love Him so much," she said, "that I think of nothing else day or night; and I wish to do nothing except what pleases Him." "Love," replied the little child, "may teach you how to please Him." At this the odour of the wounds increased; and Dominica said, "If here below a little child smells so sweet, how fragrant Paradise will be!" "Do not wonder," said the lady, "for where God is, there is the fountain of all sweets;" when, behold, the scene changed, and the countenance of the child shone like the sun, and the lady seemed clothed with much light; and Jesus took from MARY's lap the flowers, and scattered them over Dominica, saying to her, "These are by way of earnest of that which I shall give you." And this said, He vanished from her sight with His Mother; and the good little girl followed them with her heart.

## ACT OF HOMAGE.

Recite some prayers, as homage to the most holy hearts of JESUS and MARY.

## EJACULATION.

"Fac, ut ardeat cor meum in amando Christum Deum."

"One more request, and I have done;—  
With love of thee and thy dear Son  
More let me burn, and more each day,  
Till love of self is burned away."

**Prayer.**

O GOD, AT WHOSE PASSION THE SWORD OF GRIEF DID, ACCORDING TO SIMEON'S PROPHECY, PIERCE THROUGH THAT MOST SWEET SOUL OF MARY, THE GLORIOUS VIRGIN AND MOTHER, MERCIFULLY GRANT THAT WE WHO RENEW OUR VENERATION TO THE TRANSFIXION AND PASSION OF THE SAME, MAY, THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE GLORIOUS MERITS AND PRAYERS OF ALL THE SAINTS, WHO FAITHFULLY KEEP CLOSE TO THE CROSS, SUCCEED IN OBTAINING WHAT THY PASSION HAS WROUGHT FOR US ;

O  
THOU  
THAT  
LIVEST AND REIGNEST  
WORLD  
WITHOUT  
END.  
AMEN.







